SŪDRAS IN ANCIENT INDIA

(A Survey of the Position of the Lower Orders
down to *circa* A.D. 500)

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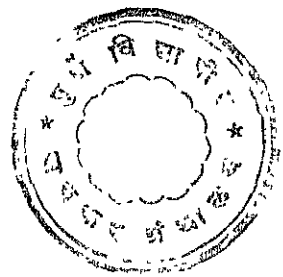

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PREFACE

I took up the study of this subject about ten years ago, but the pressing duties of an Indian university teacher and lack of proper library facilities prevented me from making any appreciable progress. The major part of the work was done in two academic sessions (1954-6) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, made possible by the generous grant of study leave by the Patna University. This book, therefore, substantially represents my thesis approved for the degree of Ph. D. at the University of London in 1956.

I wish to thank Dr. F. R. Allchin, Professor H. W. Bailey, Dr. T. N. Dave, Dr. J. D. M. Derrett, Professor C. von Furer-Haimendorf, Professor D. D. Kosambi, Professor R. N. Sharma, Dr. A. K. Warder and numerous friends, from whom I have received various kinds of help in the course of this work. I am grateful to Dr. L. D. Barnett for his valuable suggestions and encouragement from time to time. I must express my thanks to my esteemed friend Dr. Dev Raj, but for whose help in proof-reading and allied matters the publication of the book would have been further delayed. I have also to acknowledge my debt to Dr. Upendra Thakur, who has prepared the index and helped me in proof-reading. Above all, I consider myself fortunate in having worked with Professor A. L. Basham, whose exacting standards of scholarship, love of intellectual independence on the part of his students and friendly guidance have contributed much to the making of this work. But I am responsible for any errors of fact and judgment, or technical irregularities, that may have remained unnoticed. I have been, however, helpless in the case of some printing mistakes, which could not be removed in spite of my best efforts.

R. S. SHARMA

ABBREVIATIONS

AI - *Ancient India*, Delhi.
AICL - *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature.*
AIE - *Ancient Indian Education.*
AIMA - *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian.*
Ait Br. - *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.*
AK - *Amarakośa.*
Aṅg. N. - *Aṅguttara Nikāya.*
Anu. P. - *Anuśāsana Parva.*
Antag. - *Antagada* - *Dasão.*
AO - *Archiv Orientalani*, Prague.
Āp. Dh. S. - *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.*
Āp. Gr. S. - *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra.*
Āp. Śr. S. - *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra.*
AŚ - *Arthaśāstra.*
ASR - *Archaeological Survey (of India) Reports.*
ĀSS. - *Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series.*
Āśva. Gr. S. - *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra.*
Āśva. Śr. S.-*Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra.*
Āyār. - *Āyāraṅga Sutta.*
AV. - *Atharva Veda.*
Bau. Dh. S. - *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.*
Bau. Gr. S. - *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.*
Bhār. Gr. S. - *Bhāradvāja Gṛhyasūtra.*
Bhāg. P. - *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*
Bhav. P. - *Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa.*
BI - *Bibliotheca Indica.*
Bṛ. - *Bṛhaspati Smṛti.*
Bṛ. Saṃhitā - *Bṛhat Saṃhitā.*
Bṛ. Up. - *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.*
Chā. Up. - *Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*
Cal. - *Calcutta Edition of the Mahābhārata.*
CHI - *Cambridge History of India.*
CII - *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
Cr. Edn. - Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata* published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona.
Digha N. - *Digha Nikāya.*
Divya. - *Divyâvadāna.*
DKA - *Dynasties of the Kali Age.*
Ed. - Edited by, Edition.
EI - *Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta and Delhi.
Gaut. Dh. S. - *Gautama Dharmasūtra.*
GOS - *Gaikawad Oriental Series.*
HIL - *History of Indian Literature.*
Hin. P. L. - *Hindu Public Life.*
Hist. Dh. S. - *History of Dharmaśāstra.*
Hist. & Essays - *Historiography and other Essays.*
HOS - *Haward Oriental Series.*
HPL - *History of Pali Literature.*
HSL - *History of Sanskrit Literature.*
IA - *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay.
IC - *Indian Culture*, Calcutta.
IHQ - *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta.
Ind Alt. - *Indische Alterthumskunde.*
Jai. Mī. S. - *Jaimini-Mīmāṃsā Sūtra.*
JAOS - *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Baltimore.
JASB - *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.
JBBRAS-*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay.
JBORS - *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna.
JBRS - *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Patna.
JOR-*Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras.
JRAS-*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London.
JRASB-*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.
Kā. Śr. S.-*Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra*
Kām. N. S.-*Kāmandaka Nītisāra.*
Kāma S.-*Kāmasūtra.*
Kaṇ. S.-*Kaṇiṣṭhala Saṃhitā.*
Kātyā-*Kātyāyana Smṛti.*
KS-*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā.*
Kumb.-Kumbkonam Edition of the *Mahābhārata* (also indicated as *SE*).
Lātyā. Śr. S.-*Lātyāyana Śrautasūtra.*
Majj. N.-*Majjhima Nikāya.*
Manu-*Manu Smṛti*.
Mārk. P.-*Mārkandeya Purāṇa.*
Mat. P.-*Matsya Purāṇa.*
Mbh.-*Mahābhārata.*
Milinda-*Milinda-pañho.*
MR-*Modern Review*, Calcutta.
MS-*Maitrayāṇi Saṃhitā.*
Nār.-*Nārada Smṛti.*
NE-Northern Edition of the *Mahabhārata* (also indicated as Cal.)
NF-Neue Folge.
NS-New Series.
Pā-*Pānini's Grammar.*
Pañc. Br.-*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.*
Pār. Gr. S.-*Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra.*
Pat.-Patañjali's *Mahābhāsya.*
P.E.-Pillar Edict of Aśoka.
Peta. A.-*Petavatthu Aṭṭhakahā.*

PHAI-Political History of Ancient India.
PTS-Pali Text Society.
Rām -Rāmāyaṇa.
R E -Rock Edict of Aśoka.
RV-Rg Veda.
Saṃy. N.-Saṃyutta Nikāya.
Sām. Br -Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa
Śānkh. Gr S.-Śānkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.
Śānkh. Śr. S.-Śānkhāyana Śrautasūtra.
Śat. Br.-Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
Satyā. Śr. S -Satyāṣāḍha Śrautasutra.
SBB-Sacred Books of the Buddhists.
SEE-Sacred Books of the East.
SE-Southern Edition of the Mahābhārata. (also indicated as Kumb.)
ŚP-Śānti Parva.
SONI-Social Organisation of North-Eastern India.
SS-Shaima Sastry.
Sut. Nepā.-Sutta Nipāta.
Sūya -Sūyagadam.
Tai. Br.-Taittirīya Brāhmana.
TGS-T. Ganapati Śāstri's edition of the *Arthaśāstra.*
Tr.-Translated by, Translation.
TS-Taittirīya Saṃhitā.
Uttarā.-Uttarādhyayanasūtra.
Uvāsaga. - Uvāsage-Desāe.
VA-The Vedic Age.
Vā.P.-Vāyu Purāna.
Vas.Dh.S.-Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.
Ved. S.-Vedāntasūtra.
VI-Vedic Index.
Vin.-Vinaya Piṭaka.
Vin.A -Vinaya Piṭaka Aṭṭhakatha
Vis. P -Viṣnu Purāṇa.
Viṣnu-Visnu Smṛti.
VS-Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā.
Yāj.-Yājñavalkya Smṛti.
ZDMG-Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Berlin.
ZII-Zeitschrif f.. Indologie and Iranistik, Leipzig.

Roman Equivalents of Nāgarī Letters

अ	a	ए	e	क्	k	च्	c
आ	ā	ऐ	ai		kh	छ्	ch
इ	i	ओ	o		g	ज्	j
ई	ī	औ	au	घ्	gh	झ्	jh
उ	u	ऋ	ṛ	ङ्	ṅ	ञ्	ñ
ऊ	ū						
ट्	ṭ	त्	t	प्	p	य्	y
ठ्	ṭh	थ्	th	फ्	ph	र्	r
ड्	ḍ	द्	d	ब्	b	ल्	l
ढ्	ḍh	ध्	dh	भ्	bh	व्	v
ण्	n	न्	n	म्	m	श्	ś

ष्	s	Anusvāra	ं	ṃ
स्	s	Visarga	ः	ḥ
ह्	h			

This book is a comprehensive of the
cultures in the Lower Rhine area,
Holland, & Belgium. We have not
known as the people in Holland
as Dutch.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The modern study of the ancient Indian social order owed its inception to the efforts of the East India Company, which could not govern an alien people without some knowledge of their institutions. The preface to *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776), one of the first English works which have some bearing on the early social history of India, states that "the importance of the commerce of India and the advantages of a territorial establishment in Bengal" could be maintained only by "an adoption of such original institutes of the country, as do not intimately clash with the laws or interests of the conquerors."[1] In his preface to the translation of the *Manu Smṛti* (1794) Sir William Jones, the father of modern Indology, adds that, if this policy is pursued, "the well-directed industry" of "many millions of Hindu subjects" "would largely add to the wealth of Britain".[2] Four years later, on the basis of these sources, Colebrooke wrote an essay on the "Enumeration of Indian classes",[3] which appeared to him among the most remarkable institutions of India.[4] Soon after (1818) these sources were utilised by Mill to describe the caste system in his *History of India*. While discussing the disabilities of the śūdras he came to the conclusion that the vices of caste subordination were carried to a more destructive height among the Hindus than among any other people,[5] and remarked that the hideous society of the Hindus continued in his times. But from the same sources

1. *Vivādārṇavasetu*, Translator's preface, p. IX. This work was translated from English into German in 1778.

2. *Institutes of Hindu Law*, Preface, p. XIX. Cf. Discourse of Colebrooke in the first general meeting of *RAS* (15 March, 1823), *Essays*, i, 1-2.

3. *Essays*, ii, 157-70.

4. *Ibid.*, ii, 157.

5. *The History of India*, ii, 166 ; i, 166-9; 169 fn. 1. It seems that Mill's generalizations about the history of India exercised the most dominant influence on later British historians.

Elphinstone (1841) deduced that the condition of the śūdras "was much better than that of the public slaves under some ancient republics, and, indeed, than that of the villains of the middle ages, or any other servile class with which we are acquainted".[1] He also perceived that such a servile class did not exist any longer in his time.[2]

But there is no doubt that many age-old social practices continued into the 19th century. The glaring contrast between the rising industrial society of England and the old decaying society of India[3] attracted the attention of the educated intelligentsia, who were being permeated with the spirit of nationalism. They realised that the practices of satī, lifelong widowhood, child marriage, and caste endogamy were great obstacles to national progress. Since these practices were supposed to derive sanction from the Dharmaśāstras, it was felt that necessary reforms could be effected easily if they could be proved to be in consonance with the sacred texts. Thus in 1818 Rammohan Roy published his first tract against satī, in which he tried to show that, according to the śāstras, it was not the best way for the salvation of a woman.[4] In the fifties of the same century Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar ransacked Smṛti literature in order to make out a case for widow remarriage.[5] In the seventies Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Ārya Samāj, brought out a collection of original Sanskrit texts called the *Satyārthaprakāśa* to support widow remarriage, rejection of caste based on birth,[6] and the śūdras' right to Vedic education.[7] We do not know how far the early social reformers drew inspiration from the contemporary works of Muir[8], who tried to prove that the belief in the origin of the four varṇas from the primeval man did not exist in ancient times,[9]

1. *The History of India*, i, 34.
2. *Ibid.*, 107.
3. In 1902 an old Indian writer laments that the brāhmanas should be made to take their place below Eurasian (Anglo-Indian) industrialists. J. C. Ghosh, *Brahmanism and Sudra*, p. 46.
4. *The English Works of Rammohan Roy*, i, Introd., pp. XVIII; ii, 123-192.
5. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, ii, 498.
6. *Satyārthaprakāśa*, 4th samullāsa, pp. 83-92, 113-122.
7. *Ibid.*, 3rd samullāsa, pp. 39, 73-74.
8. *Original Sanskrit Texts*, i.
9. *Ibid.*, 159-60.

and from those of Weber, who presented the first important critical study of the caste system on the basis of the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras.

On the occasion of the introduction of the Age of Consent Bill in 1891, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar brought out a well-documened pamphlet citing Sanskrit texts to establish that a girl should be married only when she attains maturity. On the other hand B. G. Tilak, to whom any stick was good enough to beat the alien rulers, cited texts against this Bill.[2]

This tendency to quote ancient scriptures in support of modern reforms can be well summed up in the words of R. G. Bhandarkar (1895): "In ancient times girls were married after they had attained maturity, now they must be married before; widow marriage was in practice, now it has entierly gone out... ... Interdining among the castes was not prohibited, now the numberless castes... ... cannot have intercommunication of that nature"[3].

But the attempt of the Indian scholars to present their early social institutions in a form more acceptable to the modern mind did not always commend itself to western writers. Thus Senart (1896) pointed out that the castes have been compared by Hindus of English upbringing with the social distinctions that exist among Europeans, but that they correspond only very remotely to western social classes.[4] Similarly Hopkins (1881) stated that the position of the śūdra was not different from that of the American house slave before 1860.[5] Reviewing Hopkins' generalizations, Hillebrandt (1896) held that the position of the śūdras should be judged in comparison with the slaves of the ancient world and not in the context of developments in later times.[6]

1. *Indische Studien*, x, 1-160.
2. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, ii, 538-83.
Also see Bhandarkar's criticism of Jolly's article on the "History of Child Marriage", *Ibid.*, 584-602.
3. *Collected Works*, ii, 522-23.
4. *Caste in India*, pp. 12-13.
5. *Mutual Relations of the Four Castes in Manu*, p. 102.
6. Hillebrandt, "Brāhmaṇen und Śūdras", *Festschrift für Karl Weinhold*, p. 57.

Criticising Hopkins, Ketkar (1911) complains that European writers are influenced by their ideas of racial discrimination against the Negroes, and hence unduly exaggerate this in their treatment of the caste system.[1] The main trend noticeable in the works of recent Indian writers such as Ketkar, Dutt, Ghurye and others is to present the system in such a way as may help to recast it in response to present requirements.[2] Thus it would appear that problems of ancient Indian society have been largely studied against the background of struggle between the reformist and orthodox schools. The dominant motives of reform and nationalism have undoubtedly produced valuable works on India's early social life ; but what appeared to be seamy and ugly in comparison with modern standards came to be either ignored or explained away unconvincingly. For instance, it has been argued that the disabilities of the śūdras did not reduce their happiness or well-being.[3]

It is this tendency to concentrate on favourable aspects of early social life that accounts for the almost complete absence of works on the position of the śūdras in ancient India. Even European writers gave their attention mainly to the study of the upper classes of Hindu society. Thus Muir devoted 188 pages to the legends of struggles between brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas,[4] and Hopkins (1889) presented a comprehensive study of the "Position of Ruling Caste in Ancient India."[5] The admirable work of Fick (1897) on the social organization of north-eastern India also mainly confined itself to the treatment of kṣatriyas, brāhmaṇas and gahapatis or seṭṭhis. It is difficult to explain these writers' lack of interest in the fortunes of the lower orders unless we suppose that their vision was circumscribed by the dominant class outlook of their age.

The first independent work on the śūdras is a short article

1. Ketkar, *History of Caste*, p. 78, fn. 3.
2. Ketkar, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Radhakrishnan's foreword to Valavalkar's *Hindu Social Institutions*. The works of Dutt and Ghurye display a better historical sense, but see Dutt, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. VI.
3. On the basis of the *Śukranīti-sāra*, Sarkar, *Hindu Sociology*, p. 92-95; cf. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Indian Cameralism*, p. 85.
4. *Original Sanskrit Texts*, i, Ch. IV.
5. *JAOS*, xiii, 57-376.

by V. S. Śāstri (1922), who discusses the philosophical basis of the term *śūdra*.[1] In another article (1923) on this subject he tries to show that the śūdras could perform Vedic rituals.[2] In a recent article (1947) Ghoshal deals with the status of the śūdras in the Dharmasūtras.[3] The latest article is by a Russian writer G. F. Ilyin (1950),[4] who, on the basis of the Dharmaśāstra evidence,[5] demonstrates that śūdras were not slaves. The only monograph on śūdras (1946) is published by a well-known Indian politician, who confines himself to the question of their origin.[6] The author is entirely dependent for his source-material on translations,[7] and, what is worse, he seems to have worked with the fixed purpose of proving a high origin for the śūdras, a tendency which has been very much in evidence among the educated sections of the lower caste people in recent times. A single passage of the *Śānti Parvan*, which states that the śūdra Paijavana performed sacrifice, is sufficient to establish the thesis that śūdras were originally kṣatriyas.[8] The author does not bother himself about the complex of various circumstances which led to the formation of the labouring class known as the śūdras. A very recent work[9] (1957), allied to our subject, brings together scattered information on labourers in ancient India, but does not make any significant addition to our knowledge. The main object of this book is to explore the field of Labour Economics in ancient India, and in doing so the author notices in the past parallels to modern wage-boards, arbitrators, social

1. *IA*, li, 137-9.

2. "The Status of the Śūdra in Ancient India", *Viswa Bharati Quarterly*, i, 268-278.

3. *IC*, xiv, 21-27.

4. Śūdras und sklaven in den altindischen Gesetzbüchern" in *Sowjetwissenschaft*, 1952, 2 tr. from *Vestnik drevnei istorii*, 1950, No. 2, pp. 94-107.

5. Kane's compilation of the Dharmaśāstra extracts regarding śūdras provide valuable raw material for an historical study of their position.

6. Ambedkar, *Who were the Shudras* ?

7. *Ibid.*, Preface, p. IV.

8. It is to be noticed that in recent caste movements many śūdra castes claim to be kṣatriyas. Thus the Dusādhas claim to be the descendants of Duḥśāsana, and the Goālās those of the Yadus.

9. K. M. Saran, *Labour in Ancient India*.

security etc., with the result that this work suffers from much modernism. Moreover, the book mainly draws on the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, is sketchy, and lacks historical sense.

The present work has been undertaken not only to provide an adequate atment of the position of the śūdras in ancient times, but also to evaluate their modern characterizations, either based on insufficient data, or inspired by reformist or anti-reformist motives. An attempt will be made to present a connected and systematic account of the various developments in the position of the śūdras down to *circa* A. D. 500.

This study has to be mainly based on literary sources, the precise dating of which or of their various parts has been a baffling problem. We have adopted the generally accepted chronology of the literaty texts, but in the case of differences of opinion we have indicated our own reasons for adopting an unconventional dating.

Although the texts belong to different periods, they repeat *ad nauseam* the same formulae and terminologies, which make it difficult to detect changes in society ; hence special attention has been paid to the study of variants. Many of these texts cannot be understood without the aid of the commentato not unoften project the ideas of their own times into earlier periods.

Further, the literary texts, brāhmaṇical and non-brāhmaṇical, seek to establish the supremacy of the brāhmanas or of the kṣatriyas, or of both, but they hardly show any sympathy for the śūdras. It is argued that the Dharmaśāstras and other treatises are books written by the enemies of the śūdras and as such have no evidential value.[1] But the law-books of other ancient societies also follow the principle of class legislation as the Dharmaśāstras do ; unfortunately for lack of sufficient data we cannot definitely say how far the Dharmaśāstra laws were followed.

Since the śūdras were regarded as the labouring class, in this study particular attention has been paid to the investigation of

1. Ambedkar, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

their material conditions and the nature of their economic and social relations with the members of the higher varṇas. This has naturally involved the study of the position of slaves, with whom the śūdras were considered identical. The untouchables are also theoretically placed in the category of śūdras, and hence their origin and position has also been discussed in some detail.

In order to explain and illustrate certain developments in the position of the śūdras, wherever possible comparisons have been made with similar developments in other ancient societies and among primitive peoples known to anthropology.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN

In 1847 it was suggested by Roth that the śūdras might have been outside the pale of the Āryan society.[1] Since then it has usually been held that the fourth varṇa of brāhmaṇical society was mainly formed by the non-Āryan population, who were reduced to that position by the Āryan conquerors.[2] This view continues to derive support from the analogy of conflict between the white-coloured Europeans and the non-white population of Asia and Africa.

If Dāsas and Dasyus be identical with the original inhabitants of India speaking non-Āryan languages,[3] it is possible to adduce evidence in favour of this view from the *Ṛg Veda*. In the numerous hymns of that collection, which are repeated in the *Atharva Veda*, the Āryan god Indra appears as the conqueror of the Dāsas, who mostly appear to have been human beings. It is said that Indra consigned the base Dāsa varṇa to the cave.[4] As the controller of the world, he takes upon himself the task of bringing the Dāsas into subjection,[5] and is asked to prepare himself for their destruction.[6] The recurring theme of the Ṛg Vedic prayers to Indra is the request for the overthrow of the Dāsa tribes (*viśas*)[7]. Indra is also represented as having deprived the Dasyus of all good qualities, and as having subjugated the Dāsas.[8]

1. *ZDMG*, i, 84.
2. *VI*, ii, 265, 388; R. C. Dutt, *A Hist. of Civ. in Anc. India*, i, 12; Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 83; N. K. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, pp. 151-52; Ghurye, *Caste and Class*, pp. 151-2; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, p. 10.
3. Muir thinks that there is nothing to show that they were non-Āryans. *Original Sanskrit Texts*, ii, 387.
4. *jénemá ví'śvā ca ávanā kṛtáni, yó dásaṃ várṇamádharaṃ gúhākaḥ. RV*.II. 12. 4., *AV*, XX. 34. 4.
5. ..*yathā́ asáṃ nayati dásamāryáḥ. RV*, V. 34. 6.
6. ...*dāsáveśāya cāvaḥ. RV*, II. 13. 8. Sāyana interprets this as the destruction of the dāsas, but *VI*, i, 358 takes it as the name of a Dāsa.
7. *RV*, II. 11. 4; VI. 25. 2; and X. 148. 2.
8. *RV*, IV. 28. 4.

There are more references to the destruction or subjugation of Dasyus by Indra than of Dāsas. It is stated that having killed the Dasyus he protected the Āryan varṇa.[1] Prayer is made to him to fight against the Dasyus in order to increase the strength of the Āryans.[2] It is significant that there are at least twelve references to the slaughter of the Dasyus, mostly by Indra.[3] On the contrary, although there are references to the killing of individual Dāsas, the word *dāsahatyā* does not occur anywhere. This indicates that the two were not identical and may suggest that the Āryans followed a policy of ruthless extermination towards the Dasyus, which, in the case of the Dāsas, was tempered with moderation.

The fight between the Āryans and their opponents mainly took the form of the destruction of the fortresses and walled settlements of the latter. Both the Dāsas and Dasyus were in possession of numerous fortified settlements,[4] which are also associated with the enemies of the Āryans in a general way.[5] This naturally reminds us of the later discoveries of fortifications in the Harappā settlements.[6] It seems that the nomadic Āryans coveted the wealth of their enemies accumulated in the settlements, for the possession of which there went on a regular warfare between them.[7] The worshipper expects that all those who make no oblation should be killed and their wealth should be given to the people.[8] The Dasyus are described as rich

1. *...hatvi'dāsy ūṇpradryaṃ vdṛṇamāvat. RV*, III. 34. 9 ; *AV*, XX. 11. 9 (not in the Paippalāda recension).

2. I. 103. 3 ; *AV*, XX. 20. 4.

3. The term *dāsyu-hatyā occurs* in *RV*, I. 51. 5-6, 103. 4; X. 95. 7, 99. 7. *Dāsyu-ghnā* occurs in *RV*, IV. 16. 10 and *dāsyu-hán* in *RV*, X. 47. 4. *Dāsyu hántama* occurs in *RV*, VI. 16. 15, VIII. 39. 8, and is reproduced in *VS*, XI. 34. There are many other references to the hostility between the Āryans and Dasyus, viz. *RV*, V. 7. 10, VII. 5. 6. etc. Indra is called *dāsyu-hā* in *RV*, I. 100. 12 ; VI. 45. 24 ; VIII. 76. 11, 77. 3. There are similar references to the slaughter of Dasyus by Indra in *AV*, III. 10. 12; VIII. 8. 5, 7; IX, 2. 17 & 18 ; X. 3. 11 ; XIX. 46.2; XX. 11. 6, 21. 4, 29. 4, 34. 10, 37. 4, 42. 2, 64. 3, 78.3. and by Agni in *AV*, I. 7. 1; XI. 1. 2. Manyu is called *dāsyu-hā* in *AV*, IV. 32. 3.

4. *RV*, I. 103.3 ; II, 19. 6 ; IV. 30. 20; VI. 20. 10, 31.4.
5. *RV*, I. 33.13, 53 8 ; VIII. 17.14.
6. Wheeler, *The Indus Civil zation*, pp. 90-91.
7. *RV*, IV. 30. 13 ; V. 40 6 ; X. 69. 6.
8. *asmābhyamasya vēdanaṃ daddhi' sūriścidohate. RV*, I. 176. 4.

(*dhaninah*) but without sacrifice.[1] Mention is made of two Dāsa chiefs who are called wealth-seeking.[2] Desire is expressed that through Indra[3] the might of the Dāsa be subdued, and his collected wealth be divided among the people. The Dasyus also possessed jewels and gold, which probably excited the greed of the Āryans.[4] But to a people of cattle culture such as the Āryans, it was primarily the cattle of their enemies which held the greatest temptation. Thus it is argued that the Kīkatas do not deserve to have cows because they make no use of milk products in the sacrifice.[5] On the other hand it is likely that the enemies of the Āryans valued the horses and chariots of the latter. A Ṛg-Vedic legend tells us that the Asuras had captured the city of a royal sage named Dabhīti, but on their retreat were intercepted and defeated by Indra, who recovered cattle, horses and chariots and restored them to the prince.[6]

The Dasyu way of life further antagonised the Āryans. Apparently the tribal and semi-settled life of the Āryans based on cattle keeping was incompatible with the sedentary and urban life of the people of the indigenous culture.[7] The predominantly tribal life of the former expressed itself through several communal institutions such as the *gaṇa*, *sabhā*, *samiti* and the *vidatha* in which the sacrifice played a very important part. But the Dasyus had nothing to do with sacrifice. This was true of the Dāsas as well, for Indra is described as coming to the sacrifice distinguishing between the Dāsa and the Ārya.[8] A whole passage occurring in the seventh book of the *Ṛg Veda* consists of a string of adjectives such as *akratūn*, *aśraddhān* and *ayajñān* applied to the Dasyus to emphasise their non-sacrificing character.[9] Indra is asked to discriminate between the sacrificing Āryans and

1. *RV*, I. 33. 4.
2. *dhandāsá vṛṣabhó vasnayántoddvraje varci'nam ámbaram ca. RV*, VI. 47.21.
3. *vayám idd asya sámbhṛtam vásu i'ndreṇa vi'bhajemahi. RV*, VIII. 40.6.
4. *RV*, I. 33. 7-8.
5. *ki'm te kṛṇvanti ki'kaṭeṣu gávo náśi'raṃ duhré ná tapanti gharmám. RV*, III 53.14.
6. *RV*, II. 15. 4.
7. Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, pp. 90-91.
8. *RV*, X. 86. 19 ; *AV*, XX. 126. 19.
9. *RV*, VII. 6. 3.

non-sacrificing Dasyus.[1] They are also called *ayajvānaḥ*.[2] The word *anindra* (without Indra) is used at several places,[3] and presumably refers to the Dasyus, Dāsas and perhaps some Āryan dissenters. In the Āryan view the Dasyus practised black magic.[4] Such a belief is especially found in the *Atharva Veda*, in which the Dasyus appear as evil spirits to be scared away from the sacrifice.[5] It is said that an all-powerful amulet enabled the sage Aṅgiras to break through the Dasyus' fortresses.[6] The evil character of the Dasyus in the *Atharva Veda* seems to have been based on their fighting record in the Ṛg Vedic period. According to the *Atharva Veda* the god-blaspheming Dasyus are to be offered as victims.[7] It is believed that the Dasyus are treacherous, not practising the Āryan observances, and hardly human.[8]

The difference between the Āryan and the Dasyu way of life was further brought out by indicating the relation in which the Dasyus stood to the Āryan *vrata*, generally meaning law or ordinance.[9] If it be possible to establish some connection between this word and *vrāta*, which means tribal troops or groups, it may be suggested that the term *vrata* probably means tribal law or usage. The Dasyus are generally described as *avrata*[10] and *anyavrata*.[11] The word *apavrata* is used at two places and perhaps applies to the Dasyus and dissenting Āryans.[12] It is notable that such adjectives are not applied to the Dāsas, which again indicates that they were more amenable to the Āryan way of life than the Dasyus.

1. *RV*, I. 51. 8.
2. *RV*, I. 33. 4.
3. I. 133.1 ; V. 2. 3. ; VII. I. 8. I 6 ; X. 27. 6 ; X. 48. 7.
4. *RV*, IV. 16. 9.
5. *AV*, II. 14.5.
6. *AV*, X. 6. 20.
7. *AV*, XII. 1. 37.
8. *RV*, X. 22. 8.
9. P. V. Kane, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxix, 12.
10. *RV*, I. 51. 8-9 ; I. 101. 2 ; I. 175. 3 ; VI. 14. 3 ; IX. 41. 2. The term *avrata*, however, has nowhere been applied to the Dāsas.
11. *RV*, VIII. 70. 11 ; X. 22. 8.
12. *RV*, V. 42. 9; in V. 40. 6 the term *apavrata* is identified with darkness.

There are reasons to think that there was difference of colour between the Āryans and their enemies. It appears that the Āryans, who are called human (*mānusī prajā*), worshipping Agni Vaiśvānara, on occasions set fire to the settlements of the dark-hued people (*asiknīviśaḥ*), who deserted their possessions without fighting.[1] The Āryan deity Soma is described as killing people of black skin, who apparently were Dasyus.[2] Further, Indra had to contend against the Rākṣasas of black skin (*tvacamasiknīm*),[3] and at one place he is credited with the slaughter of fifty thousand 'blacks' (*kṛṣṇas*) whom Sāyaṇa regards as Rākṣasas of black colour.[4] The god is also described as tearing off the black skin of the Asura.[5] An important exploit of Indra, which may have some historical basis, refers to his fight against a hero known as Kṛṣṇa. It is stated that, when Kṛṣṇa encamped on the Aṃśumatī or Yamunā with ten thousand soldiers, Indra mobilised the Maruts (the Āryan *viś*) and fought against the *adevīḥ viśaḥ* with the help of the priest-god Bṛhaspati.[6] *Adevīḥ viśaḥ* are explained by Sāyaṇa as Asuras of black colour (*kṛṣṇarūpāḥ asurasenāḥ*). It is suggested that Kṛṣṇa was the non-Āryan dark hero of the Yādava tribe.[7] This seems likely because later traditions speak of hostility between Indra and Kṛṣṇa. There is also reference to the killing of the *kṛṣṇagarbhā*, doubtfully interpreted by Sāyaṇa as pregnant wives of an Asura named Kṛṣṇa[8] Similarly mention is made of the overthrow of the *kṛṣṇayoniḥ dāsīḥ* by Indra.[9] Sāyaṇa fancifully takes them as the lowest demon-like troops (*nikṛṣṭajātīḥ ... āsurīḥ senāḥ*), but

1. *RV*, VII. 5. 2-3. Geldner's tr. The end of Harappā culture at Rānā Ghundai III is marked with 'a great conflagration'. B. B. Lal, *AI*, 9, p. 88.

2. *ghnánto kṛṣṇám ápa tvácam...sáhvāṃso dásyumavratám. RV*, IX. 41. 1-2.

3. *RV*, IX. 73. 5.

4. *RV*, IV. 16. 13. Geldner, however, does not introduce the Rākṣasas in this context.

5. *RV*, I. 130. 8.

6. ... *átha drapsó aṃśumátyā upásthe dhārayattanvàṃ titviṣāṇáḥ ; viśó ádevīrabhyà carantīr bṛ'haspátinā yujéndraḥ sasāhe. RV*, VIII. 96. 13-15.

7. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxvii, 43.

8. *yáḥ kṛṣṇágarbhā nírdhanṃ rjiśvānā. RV*, I. 101. 1.

9. *sá vṛtrahéndraḥ kṛṣṇáyoniḥ purandarddásīrairyadvi'...RV*, II. 20.7. Sāyaṇa's comm. But Geldner suggests that *dasīḥ* implies understood *puraḥ*, and that the poet is thinking in terms of pregnancy.

Wilson takes *kṛṣṇa* in the sense of black. If the latter meaning be correct, it would appear that the Dāsas were black in colour. But the description 'black' may have been applied indiscriminately to them as it was to the Dasyus and other enemies of the Āryans. The above references, however, leave little doubt that the Āryan followers of Indra, Agni and Soma had to fight against the black people of India. In one reference, the Ṛg Vedic hero Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa, is described as the leader of the 'dark-complexioned' men.[1] This may indicate that he had established his hold over them.

If the word *anāsa*[2] applied to the Dasyus is taken in the sense of 'noseless' or one with a flat nose, and the term *vṛṣaśipra* applied to the Dāsas[3] as bull lipped' or having big protruding lips, it would appear that the enemies of the Āryans were physiognomically different.

The term *mṛdhravāk*, which occurs in its different forms at six places in the *Ṛg Veda*,[4] gives some idea of difference in the manner of speech between the Āryans and their enemies. It qualifies Dasyus at two places.[5] Sāyaṇa explains it as 'of hostile speech', and Geldner renders it as 'of wrong speech'.[6] Unless the term *mṛdhravācaḥ* is taken in the sense of 'unintelligible speech', it does not give any evidence of linguistic difference between the Āryans and the Dasyus, but only shows that the latter hurt the sentiments of the Āryans by their improper speech. Thus although the main issue in the war between the Āryans and their enemies was the possession of cattle, chariots and other forms of wealth, differences in race, religion and mode of speech also served to exacerbate relations.

If inferences can be drawn from the relative occurrences of the terms *dāsa* and *dāsyu* in the Ṛg *Veda*, it would appear that the Dasyus, who are mentioned eighty-four times, were obviously

1. *RV*, VIII. 19. 36-37.
2. *RV*, V. 29. 10. Sāyaṇa explains *anāsa* as one without speech (*āsyarahita*).
3. *RV*, VII. 99. 4.
4. *RV*, I.174.2. ; V. 29. 10, 32. 8; VII. 6. 3, 18.13. Not at four places, as in *Who were the Shudras*, p. 71.
5. *RV*, V. 29. 10 ; VII. 6. 3.
6. In *RV*, I.174.2 Geldner translates *mṛdhravācaḥ* as 'missredend'.

numerically stronger than the Dāsas, who are mentioned sixty-one times.[1] The struggle against the Dasyus was attended with much bloodshed. The Āryans, who in the early stage of their expansion coveted cattle for their upkeep, naturally did not understand the value of urban settlements and organised agriculture.[2] The destruction of the pre-Āryan urban settlements seems to have been complete. It is this which accounts for the disappearance of urban life during the Vedic period. While the spoils of war, especially cattle, must have added to the power of the warriors and priests, raising them above the *viś*, it was slowly realised that the peasants of the older culture could provide labour power with which the Āryans could carry on agriculture.

Alongside the conflict between the Āryans and their enemies there went on the internal conflict in the Āryan tribal society. Through a battle song addressed to Manyu (personified Wrath), his aid is invoked for overcoming the two kind of enemies, Āryans and Dāsas.[3] Indra is asked to fight against both the godless Dāsas and Āryans who are described as the enemies (*śatravaḥ*) of his followers.[4] It is said that Indra and Varuṇa killed the Dāsas and Āryans who were the adversaries of Sudās and thus protected him.[5] On behalf of the good and righteous people prayer is made to the two chief Ṛg Vedic deities Agni and Indra to counteract the hostile activities and oppressions of the Āryans and Dāsas.[6] Since Āryans were one of the chief enemies of their fellow men, it is no wonder that along with the Dāsas they also are said to have been destroyed by Indra.[7] If Wilson's translation of a Ṛg Vedic passage be accepted, Indra is lauded for having saved the people from the Rākṣasas and Āryans on

1. Computed on the basis of refs. given in Viśvabandhu Śāstri's *Vedic Kośa*.

2. Wheeler suggests the complete break-up of organised agriculture on account of the invasion of the uncivilised nomads (i.e. Āryans). *op. cit.*, p. 8.

3. *sāhyáma dásamdryam tráyā yujá sdhaskṛtena sdhasā sdhasvatā. RV*, X. 83.1 identical with *AV*, IV. 32. 1.

4. *RV*, X. 38.3 ; cf. *AV*, XX. 36. 10.

5. *dásā ca vṛtrá haidmdryāṇi ca sudásam indrāvarunádvasāvatam. RV*, VII. 83.1.

6. *RV*, VI. 60. 6.

7. *RV*, VI. 33.3 ; cf. X. 102. 3.

the bank of the seven rivers, and is further called upon to deprive the Dāsas of their weapons.[1]

Of thirty-six occurrences of the word *ārya* in the *Ṛg Veda* nine make clear mention of hostility among the Āryans themselves.[2] At one place the Āryan enemies are lumped together with the Dasyus and at five places with the Dāsas, which again suggests that the Dāsas were on better terms with a section of the Āryans than were the Dasyus. They were considered as natural allies of the Āryans in their inter-tribal conflicts, which gradually undermined the tribal basis of their society, and helped the process of fusion between the Āryans and Dāsas. Five of these references occur in the earlier portions of the *Ṛg Veda*, which shows that the internal conflict was a fairly old process.

The most important evidence for internal conflict within the Āryan fold at an early date is the record of the *Dāśarājña* battle, which is the only important historical event in the *Ṛg Veda*. Geldner thinks that *RV*, VII. 33, which speaks of this battle, belongs to an early period.[3] The Battle of Ten Kings was primarily a conflict between two main branches of the Ṛg Vedic Āryans, namely the Pūrus and the Bhāratas, in which the non-Āryans may have joined as auxiliaries.[4] While the Bhāratas were led by the famous Ṛg Vedic hero Sudās and assisted by their priest Vasiṣṭha, their enemies comprised ten kings belonging to the five well-known tribes—Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Turvaśas and Pūrus, along with five less known tribes—Alina, Paktha, Bhalānas, Śiva and Viṣāṇin. The opposing confederacy was organised by the priest Viśvāmitra and led by the Pūrus.[5] It appears that the battle was, in fact, a memorable attempt of

1. *yd ṛ'kṣāddṃhaso mucddy ôdṛyāt saptá si'ndhuṣu* ;

vádhardāsdsya tuvinṛmṇa nínamaḥ. *RV*, VIII. 24. 27. Geldner takes the passage in the sense of Indra's turning aside the weapon of the Dāsa from the Āryan.

2 *RV*, VI. 33.3, 60.6 ; VII. 83.1 ; VIII. 24.27 (a disputed passage); X. 38.3, 69.6, 83.1, 86. 19, 102.3. Four of these refs. have been correctly quoted by Ambedkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-4.

3. *VI*, i, 356, fn. 4 of *s. v.* Dāśa-rājña.

4. *RV*, VII. 33.2-5, 83.8 The actual battle hymn occurs in *RV*, VII.18.

5. *VA*, p. 245. On account of their hostility to other Āryans the Pūrus are called *mṛdhravācaḥ* in *RV*, VII. 18. 13.

the lesser Āryan tribes to maintain their separate identities, but they were completely routed by the Bhāratas under Sudās on the Paruṣṇi. There is no indication of the treatment of these conquered Āryans, but essentially it might have been the same as in the case of the non-Āryans.

It is not unlikely that there were many other inter-tribal conflicts of this kind, of which we have no records. Indications of such struggles are found in references which represent the Āryans as violators of *vratas* established by the gods. Five such passages quoted by Kane from the *Ṛg Veda* can be interpreted in this light.[1] In a dialogue between the primeval priest Atharvan and Varuṇa, the priest boasts : "No Dāsa by his greatness, not an Āryan, may violate the law that I will establish."[2]

Muir has quoted as many as fifty-eight passages from the *Ṛg Veda*, which he interprets as containing denunciations of religious hostility or indifference shown by the members of the Āryan community.[3] Many of these passages belong to the kernel (Book II—VIII) of the *Ṛg Veda*, and may be taken as reflecting the conditions prevailing in the earliest period of the Āryan settlements. Several of these are directed against the illiberal people who are called *arādhasam*,[4] *apṛṇantam*[5] or *apṛṇataḥ*.[6] At one place Indra is described as the enemy of the prosperous (*edhamānadvit*) probably of Āryans who rendered him no service ;[7] since Dāsas and Āryans who concealed their treasure from the people were considered objects of attack.[8] For the sake of his people Agni is said to have captured property whether situated in the plains or the hills, and to have overcome

1. *JBBRAS*, NS, xxix, 11.
2. *nú m āsó nárya mahitvá vratám mímāya yádahám dhariṣyé. AV*, V. 11.3; *Paipp.*, VIII. 1.3.
3. *JRAS*, NS, ii, 286-294.
4. *RV*, 1.84.8.
5. *RV*, I. 125.7.
6. *RV*, VI. 44.11.
7. *RV*, *VI*. 47. 16 ; *JRAS*, NS, ii, 286-294.
8. *yáyāyádm viśva árya dásaḥ śevadhipá ari'ḥ. RV*, VIII. 51. 9. Sāyaṇa's comm. to this passage, and also that of Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara to a similar passage in *VS*, XXXIII, take *dāsa* as an adjective of *ārya*, but Geldner (*RV*. VIII. 51. 9) takes *ārya* and *dāsa* as two independent nouns. In any case it is clear that the Aryan was also an object of attack.

their Dāsa and Āryan enemies.[1] These passages suggest that even the Āryan enemies were deprived of their possessions (presumably cattle) and consequently reduced to the status of impoverished non-Āryans.

Many passages show a general hostility towards the people known as Paṇis[2] Muir understands them as niggards.[3] According to the authors of the *Vedic Index* Paṇi in the *Ṛg Veda* denotes a person who is rich, but who does not give offerings to the gods, or bestow *dakṣiṇās* on the priests, and who is therefore an object of intense dislike to the composers of the Saṃhitā.[4] In one passage they were described as *bekanāṭas* or 'usurers' (?) subdued by Indra.[5] The fact that the Paṇis were capable of making sacrifices and entitled to wergeld shows that they were members of the Āryan fold.[6] Hildebrandt indentifies them with the Parṇis[7] who formed part of "the Dahae, a great group of Scythian tribes of horsemen and warriors".[8] The authors of the *Vedic Index* think that the term is wide enough to cover either the aborigines or hostile Āryan tribes.[9]

Of the passages which represent Paṇis as niggards, and condemn illiberal people in general, some may have been inspired by greedy priests eager for gifts, but on the whole they seem to reflect the tendency among certain Āryans to accumulate wealth at the cost of their fellow tribesmen, who naturally expected some share in their acquisitions through sacrifices made to Indra and other gods,[10] thus providing frequent occasions for the common feasts of the community. Failure to check this process was bound to give rise to economic and social inequalities.

1. *sámajıyd parvatyā́ vásūni dā́sā vṛtrā́ṇyāryā́ jigetha. RV,* X. 69.6.
2. *RV,* I. 124.10 ; 182.3 ; IV. 25.7, 51.3 ; V. 34.7. VI. 13.3, 53.6-7.
3. *JRAS,* NS, ii, 286-294.
4. *VI,* i, 471.
5. *Ibid. RV,* VIII. 66.10.
6. *VI,* i, 472.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Ghirshman, *Iran,* p. 243.
9. i, 472.
10. *RV,* VII. 40.6.

It remains to be examined how the extra-tribal and inter-tribal struggles of the Āryans led to the disintegration of tribal society and the formation of social classes. Although the word *varna* is applied to the Āryan[1] and Dāsa[2] in the *Ṛg Veda*, it does not indicate any division of labour, which became the basis of the broad social classes of later times. *Ārya*-and *Dāsa-varṇas* represent two large tribal groups, which were in the process of disintegration into social classes. There is sufficient evidence for this in the case of the Āryan people. Criticising Senart Oldenberg rightly points out that caste does not exist in the *Ṛg Veda*,[3] but the collection does give the impression of slowly emerging social classes in their embryonic stage. The word *brāhmaṇa* occurs fifteen times and *kṣatriya* nine times. Nevertheless, as would appear from the repeated occurrences of words such as *jana* and *viś*,[4] and from the nature of its institutions, Ṛg Vedic society was basically tribal in character. We do not know whether the Āryans possessed slaves at the time of their first advent in India. According to Keith the Vedic Indians were primarily pastoral ;[5] at least this holds good of the Āryans known from the early parts of the *Ṛg Veda*. Anthropological investigations show that some pastoral tribes also keep slaves although in a relative sense slavery is more developed among agricultural tribes.[6]

But there is no doubt that the urban population of Harappā society had differences of wealth almost amounting to class divisions.[7] Wheeler suggests that between the Harappans and Mesopotamians slaves formed one of the articles of trade.[8] It is reasonable to hold that the Harappā urban settlements could not have flourished without the surplus in agricultural products provided by the peasants in the adjacent countryside.

1. *RV*, III.34.9.
2. *devdso manyún ádasyya śamnaviś na á vakṣantsuvitdya vāṇam. RV*, I.104.2; III 34.9.
3. *ZDMG*, ii, 272.
4. *Jana* is mentioned about 275 times and *viś* about 170 times.
5. *CHI*, i 99.
6. Landtman, *Origins of Social Inequalities*, p. 230.
7. Childe, *The Most Ancient East*, p. 175.
8. *The Indus Civ.*, p. 94.

The pattern of the Indus political system has been likened to that of Sumer—a priest-king governing a servile population through a rigid bureaucracy.[1] We do not know in what relation the Dasyus and Dāsas stood to the various classes and peoples of Harappā society. As the Āryans advanced further east in the Gaṅgā valley, they probably encountered the Copper Hoard people who were the earlier inhabitants of that region.[2] It is clear that, like other peoples in the copper age, these peoples also may have been divided into classes.

For lack of data it is difficult to get a precise idea of the effects of the Āryan impact on Harappā society and *vice versa*. Spoils of war must have added to the wealth and social status of the tribal leaders, who could afford to patronise priests by making gifts of cattle, and in some cases of female slaves. Thus a sacrificer is described as moving with his chariot "first in rank and wealthy, munificient and lauded in assemblies".[3]

Despite the paucity of information reasonable hypotheses may be made about the social adjustment between the Āryans and survivors of Harappā society and other peoples. In the first flush of the Āryan expansion the destruction of the settlements and the peoples such as the Dasyus seems to have been so complete that very few people in north-western India would remain to be absorbed into the new society. But this may not have been the case in the succeeding stages of their expansion. While the majority of the survivors and especially the comparatively backward peoples would be reduced to helotage, the natural tendency would be for the *viś* of the Āryan society to mix with the lower orders and for the Āryan priests and warriors to mix with the higher classes of earlier societies. That in some cases the enemies of the Āryans were given high status in the new composite society is clear from two references. At one place Indra is described as converting the Dāsas into Āryas.[4]

1. Mackay, *Early Indus Civilizations*, pp. xii-xiii.
2. Lal, *AI*, No. 9, 93.
3. *RV*, II. 27.12.
4. *yáyā ī dásānyāryāṇi vṛtrā́ kárvo vajrintsutúkā nā́huṣāṇi*. *RV*, VI. 22.10.

Sāyaṇa explains this as teaching them the Āryan way of life. At another place Indra is said to have deprived the Dasyus of the title of the *ārya*.[1] May this suggest that some Dasyus were raised to Āryan status and then deprived of it, presumably on account of their anti-Āryan activities? All this leads us to suppose that some of the surviving priests and chiefs from the enemy peoples were given corresponding positions (possibly of inferior nature) in the new Āryan society.

It has been contended that Brāhmaṇism is a pre-Āryan institution.[2] But the equation of the word *brāhmaṇa* with the Latin *flāmen*, the designation of a type of priest whose office was created during the period of the Roman kings, undermines this hypothesis.[3] Besides this equivalence there is the well-known similarity between the Atharvan priests of Vedic Indian and Athravans of Iran. But nevertheless a major objection remains to be answered. Keith says that the state of Ṛg Vedic belief and the comparative magnitude of the Vedic pantheon must have been the product of much priestly effort and the outcome of wholesale syncretism.[4] Further, sufficient evidence has been adduced from Vedic and epic traditions to show that Indra was a brahmicide, and that his chief enemy Vṛtra was a brāhmaṇa.[5] This also confirms the hypothesis that developed priesthood was a pre-Āryan institution, and implies that all the conquered people were not reduced to the position of the dāsas and śūdras. And hence, though the brāhmaṇa as such was an Indo-European institution, the priestly class of the Āryan conquerors may have been largely recruited from the conquered.[6] Though there is nothing to indicate the proportion, it seems that some of the pre-Āryan priests found their way into the new

1. *ahám śúṣṇasya śnáthitā vádharyamaṃ ná yó rarā́ áryaṃ nā́ma dásyave*. *RV*. X. 49.3.

2. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 306-8.

3. Dumézil, *Flāmen-Brahman*, Chs. II & III. For another view see Paul Thieme, *ZDMG*, NF, 27, pp. 91-129.

4. *CHI*, i, 103.

5. W. Ruben "Indra's Fight against Vṛtra in the Mahābhārata." *S. K. Commemoration Volume* (in press ; shown by the courtesy of Dr. A. S. Altekar), pp. 116-8 ; D. Kosambi, *Bhagavān Buddha*, p. 24.

6. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxii, 35.

society. It would be wrong to think that all the 'blacks' were reduced to the status of the śūdra helots, since there are some references to black seers. In the *Ṛg Veda* the Aśvins are described as presenting fair-skinned women to black (śyāvāya) Kaṇva,[1] who probably is named *kṛṣṇa* 'black' at another place[2] and is the poet of the hymns (*RV*, VIII. 85 and 86) addressed to the twin gods. It is perhaps again Kaṇva who is mentioned as *kṛṣṇa ṛṣi* in the first book of the *Ṛg Veda*.[3] Similarly Dīrghatamas, mentioned as a singer in one hymn of the *Ṛg Veda*, may have been of dark colour, if his name was given to him on account of his complexion.[4] It is significant that in several passages of the *Ṛg Veda* he is known by his metronymic Māmateya alone, and a later legend says that he married Uśij, a slave girl and begot Kākṣīvant.[5] Again in the first book of the *Ṛg Veda* priestly Divodāsas, whose name suggests a dāsa origin,[6] are described as composing new hymns,[7] while in the tenth book the Aṅgiras author of the *RV*, X. 42-44 is called 'black'.[8] Since most of the above references occur in the later portions of the *Ṛg Veda* it would appear that towards the end of the Ṛg Vedic period some of the black seers and Dāsa priests were worming their way into the newly organised Āryan community.

Similarly it appears that some of the conquered chiefs received high status in the new society. Priestly acceptance of gifts from the Dāsa chiefs such as Balbūtha and Tarukṣa earned them unstinted praises, through which they gained in status in the new order. That the Dāsas were in a position to make gifts and were looked upon as liberal donors can be deduced from the very meaning of the roots *daś* from which the noun Dāsa is

1. *RV*, I, 117.8, but Sāyaṇa explains *śyāvāya* as *kuṣṭharogeṇa śyāmavarṇāya*.
2. *RV*, VIII 85.3-4. Kaṇva is also mentioned in *RV*, VIII. 50.10.
3. *RV*, I.116.23 ; cf. I. 117.7. Pargiter thinks that the Kāṇvāyanas are the only proper brāhmaṇas. *DKA*, p. 35.
4. *RV*, I. 158.6 ; Ambedkar, *Who were the Śūdras?*, p. 77.
5. *VI*, i. 366. In the *Śat. Br.*, XIV. 9.4.15, there is the case of a mother wishing for a black son who possesses the knowledge of the Veda.
6. Hillebrandt's suggestion, *VI*, i, 363.
7. *RV*, I. 130. 10.
8. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxvi, 44.

derived.[1] The process of assimilation went on in later times, for the later literature records the tradition that Pratardana Daivodāsi went to the world of Indra,[2] who was historically the the titular ruler of the Āryan invaders.

Early literature throws hardly any light on the process of assimilation between the Āryan commoners (*viś*) and those of the survivors of earlier societies. It is likely that most of them were reduced to what came to be known as the fourth varṇa in Āryan society. But, if we leave out the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, there is no evidence of the śudra varṇa in the *Ṛg Veda*. In the early Ṛg Vedic period there existed, however, a small servile class of female slaves. It seems that, when the male members of the enemies of the Āryans were killed, their wives were reduced to slavery. Thus it is stated that Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, gave away fifty women as gifts.[3] Further evidence for the existence of female slaves is to be found in the earlier portions of the *Atharva Veda*. Therein the female slave is described as wet-handed, smearing the pestle and mortar,[4] and also as throwing lye on the droppings of the cow,[5] which shows that she was engaged in domestic work. This collection provides the earliest reference to a black *dāsī*.[6] References, therefore, suggest that in the early Vedic society female slaves were employed in domestic work. The use of the word *dāsī* makes it obvious that these were the womenfolk of the conquered Dāsas.

The use of the word *dāsa* in the sense of slave is to be found mostly in the later portions of the *Ṛg Veda*. Two cases occur in the first book,[7] one in the tenth book,[8] and one in the supplementary hymns (called *vālakhilya*) inserted in the eigth book.[9]

1. *s. v.* dāś, dās, Monier-Williams, *Sansk-Eng. Dict.*
2. *Kauṣītaki Upa.*, III.1. quoted in *VI*, ii.30.
3. *RV*, VIII.19.36.
4. *yādvā dāryādrdhastā sdmamtā ulūkhalam musalam śumbhatāpaḥ. AV*, XII. 3.13 ; *Paipp.*, XVII.37.3.
5. *AV*, XII.4.9 ; in the parallel passage in the *Paipp.* XVII. 16.9 the term *dāsī* is replaced by *devī*.
6. *AV*, V.13.8.
7. *RV*, I.92.8, 138.5. after Geldner's tr.
8. *RV*, X.62.10
9. *RV*, VIII. 56.3.

The only early reference of this type is found in the eighth book,[1] in the *Ṛg Veda* there seems to be no other word which could mean slave, and it is thus clear that male slaves hardly existed in the early Ṛg Vedic period.

Of the number and nature of slaves in the later Ṛg Vedic period, references give only a vague idea. In the *vālakhilyā* there is mention of a hundred slaves, who are placed in the same category as asses and sheep.[2] The word *dāsa-pravarga* in another later reference may mean wealth or assemblage of slaves.[3] This would suggest that towards the end of the Ṛg Vedic period slaves were increasing in number, but there is no evidence of their being engaged in productive activities. They seem to have been in the nature of domestic servants attending on their priestly or warrior masters. These masters were usually warriors, only one reference mentions a priest Dīrghatamas as owning slaves.[4] They could be freely given away.[5] It seems that failure to pay debts resulted in the enslavement of the defaulter.[6] But the very name dāsa shows that war was the most important source of slavery during the Vedic period.

Who were the Dāsas? They have been generally confused with the Dasyus. But the absence of the word *dāsa-hatyā* (slaughter of the Dāsas), in contrast to *dasyu-hatyā* (slaughter of the Dasyus), the appearance of Dāsas as auxiliaries in the inter-tribal wars of the Aryans,[7] the absence of their description as *apa-vrata, anya-vrata*, etc., the mention of *dāsa viśas* (clans) at three places,[8] and above all their indentification with the Iranian

1. *RV*, VII. 86.7. Hillebrandt regards this as of doubtful nature. He wrongly adds 'vielleicht' to VII.86.3, which should be VII.86.7. *ZII*, iii. 16.

2. *Śatáṃ me gardabhānāṃ śatámūrṇāvatīnāṃ; śatáṃ dāsá áti srájaḥ. RV*, VIII. 56.3. It is possible that 100 may be a conventional number.

3. *dṛṣiámaśyāṃ yaśásaṃ suvíraṃ dāsápravargaṃ rayímáśva budhyam. RV*, I. 92.8.

4. *RV*, I.158. 5-6.

5. *utá dāsá parivṛṣe smá ríkṣatī gópariṇasā; yádusturváśa mámahe. RV*, X.62.10.

6. *RV*, X. 34.4

7. *Supra*, pp. 9, 15.

8. *RV*, II.11.4, IV.28.4 and VI.25.2. B. N. Dutt thinks that the mention of Dāsa viś in *RV*, VI.25.2, means that the Dāsa gets the vaiśya rank (*Studies in Hindu Social Polity*, p. 334). But since the vaiśyas did not exist then as a social class *viś* can be better interpreted here as clan.

Dahae,[1] a Scythian tribe, sharply distinguish the Dāsas from the Dasyus, who seem to have had hardly anything in common with the Āryans.[2] On the contrary, the Dāsas were probably an advance guard of mixed Indo-Āryan peoples who came to India at the time when the Kassites appeared in Babylonia (c. 1750 B. C.). This can be linked up with the archaeological hypothesis which assumes either a continuous movement or two main movements of peoples from Northern Persia towards India and places the first movement fairly soon after 2000 B.C.[3] It is perhaps this which accounts for the Āryan policy of conciliation towards them and the easy assimilation into the Āryan fold of their chiefs such as Divodāsa, Balbūtha and Turukṣa. It is because of this that the Dāsas appear as frequent allies of the Āryans in their inter-tribal conflicts. Thus it would appear that the name *dāsa* in the sense of slave was derived not from the non-Āryan inhabitants of India but from a people allied to the Indo-Āryans. In the later period of the *Ṛg Veda* the term dāsa may have been employed indiscriminately not only to cover the survivors of the original Indo-European *dāsas* but also pre-Āryan peoples such as Dasyus and Rākṣasas, and also those sections of the Āryans who were impoverished or reduced to subjection on account of internal conflicts within their ranks.

Had the number of the Āryans been small, they could have imposed themselves as a new ruling minority consisting of the upper classes on the conquered peoples as did the Hittites, Kassites and the Mitanni in Western Asia. But the Ṛg Vedic evidence is fatal to such an hypothesis.[4] Not only is there mention of mass slaughter of the conquered peoples, but also of the settlements of numerous Āryan tribes.[5] Recent discoveries of

1. The Dahae may have been closely allied in race and language with the Iranians, but this is not very clearly proved. (Vi, i, 357, fn. 20). Zimmer calls the Daoi or Daai of Heredotus, i, 126, a Turanian tribe. (*Ibid.*)

2. It is suggestsed that the Dāsas and Āryas were on a social level, above the Dasyu-Bhils. Shafer, *Ethnography in Anc. India*, p. 32.

3. Stuart Piggot, *Antiquity*, Vol. XXIV, No.96, 218. Lal suggests the influx of peoples at Shāhī Tump (modern Baluchistan) in the first half of the second millenium B.C., and at Fort Munro (Afghanistan) in the second half of the second millenium B.C. *AI*, No. 9, pp. 90-91.

4. *s. v.* varna, *VI*, ii, p. 255, fn. 67.

5. For *RV* tribes see *VA*, pp. 245-8 and for later Vedic tribes, pp. 252-262.

Painted Grey Ware, which is undoubtedly a continuation of the Grey Ware tradition of Iran, and is said to be as old as the 12th century B.C., are associated with the Āryans.[1] The fact that this pottery occurs at numerous sites in the upper Gaṅgā and Sutlej basins and in the Ghaggar Valley and that it can be assigned to the period *circa* 1100-800 B. C.[2] indicates that the people who made it came in substantial numbers.

Again, the distribution of the Āryan languages over the greater part of India presupposes mass migration of their speakers. As will be shown later, in Northern India the śūdras, along with the vaiśyas, accounted for the overwhelming majority of the population, but there is nothing to show that they spoke non-Āryan languages. On the other hand, in the later Vedic period the śūdras understood the Āryan speech, as is clear from the formula of address used for them on the occasion of the sacrifice.[3] In this connection a tradition from the *Mahābhārata* is significant : "Sarasvatī, consisting of the Veda, was formerly designed by Brahmā for all the four castes ; but the śūdras having through cupidity fallen into 'ignorance', a condition of darkness, lost the right to the Veda."[4] Weber understands this passage to mean that in ancient times the śūdras spoke the language of the Āryans.[5] It is possible that some of the autochthonous tribes abandoned their speech in favour of Āryan dialects, as in modern times several tribal peoples in Bihar have given up their languages and adopted Āryan dialects such as Kurmālī and Sadānā, but their number must have been small as compared to that of the people whose language they adopted. Even in modern times, when the Āryan-speaking people enjoy much better facilities for spreading their language and culture, they have not been able to oust the non-Āryan languages which, in some cases, have shown capacity for vigorous growth.

1. B. Lal, 'Protohistoric Investigation', *AI*, No. 9, 97.
2. Besides Hastināpura this ware has been discovered at over thirty other sites in the upper Gangā and Sutlej basins, and at twenty sites in the Ghaggar valley. *Ibid.*, 96.
3. *Śat. Br.*, I.1.4.11-12.
4. *varṇāścatvāra ete. hi yeṣāṃ brāhmī sarasvatī; vihitā brāhmaṇā pūrvā lobhāttvajñānatāṃ gatāḥ. SP*, 181.15.
5. *Indische Studien*, ii, 94, fn.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion it would not be overbold to state that the Āryans came to India in large numbers. With some possible admixture from the enemy tribes, warriors and priests could account only for a small minority of the Āryan population. In course of time the majority of the Āryans could not escape the fate of being reduced to the position of commoners and helots. But in the Ṛg Vedic period the process of economic and social differentiation was still in its very early stage. In the predominantly tribal society the military leaders had hardly any fixed and regular source of surplus grain or cattle, on which they and their priestly supporters could live and flourish. Their most important source of income lay in the occasional exaction of tribute and spoils of war from the conquered peoples, which also, presumably, they had to share with the members of the tribe.[1] *Bali* is the only word indicating some sort of tax in the *Ṛg Veda*. Generally it means a tribute or offering made to a god,[2] but it is also used in the sense of tribute paid to the king,[3] Probably the payment of *bali* was voluntary,[4] as there was no machinery of collection or collector such as the *bhāga-dugha* of later Vedic times[5] to realise it from the people. We have no instance of the grant of land by the tribal kings to their warrior or priestly followers, presumably because the land belonged to the tribe as a whole. The equalitarian character of Ṛg Vedic society is further evident from the prescription of the same wergeld for everybody, male or female,[6] the compensation amounting to a hundred cows.[7]

In essence the Ṛg Vedic Āryan society, and perhaps the society described in the *Atharva Veda*, was characterised by the absence of sharp class divisions amongst its members, a feature which is usually found in early societies.[8] Perhaps the Purāṇic

1. R. S. Sharma, *JBRS*, xxxviii, 434-5 ; xxxix, 418-9.
2. *RV*, I. 70.9 ; V.1.10 ; VIII. 100.9.
3. '*Balihṛt*' (paying tribute) in *RV*, VII. 6.5 ; X. 173.6.
4. Zimmer's view quoted in *VI*, ii, 62.
5. *VI*, ii, 100.
6. Max Müller's tr. of *RV*, V. 61.8, *SBE*, xxxii, 361.
7. *VI*, ii, 331.
8. Landtman, *Origin of Social Inequalities*, instances quoted on pp. 5-12. He also refers to the absence of classes among the Nāgas and Kookies of Eastern India (p. 11).

speculation regarding the origin of the varṇas refers to this stage, when it states that until the advent of the Tretā age there was no varṇa division and nothing like the greed or the tendency to steal.[1] But even in the earliest period, in addition to the slowly emerging military leaders and priests, there were husbandmen and artisans who practised a number of crafts. Common words for weaver, tanner, carpenter and painter suggest their Indo-European origins.[2] The existence of a widespread Indo-European word for chariot shows that the chariot-maker may have been known to the Indo-Europeans.[3] The *rathakāra* (chariot-maker), however, does not appear in the *Ṛg Veda*, where the carpenter's work is referred to in several early passages.[4] It appears from the *Atharva Veda* that chariot-makers (*rathakāra*) and metal workers (*karmāra*) enjoyed a position of importance in society. In the early portion of that collection a newly elected king prays to a plant amulet (*parṇa-maṇi*) to help him to strengthen his position among the skilful builders of chariots, and the ingenious workers of metal, who constitute the folk around him. These artisans are to be made his helpers,[5] and in this sense seem to be on a par with the kings, king-makers, charioteers (*sūta*) and troopleaders (*grāmaṇi*),[6] who constitute the folk round about the king and are likewise to be made his helpers.[7]

Obviously the crafts mentioned above were practised by the members of the Āryan community (*viś*), and no social stigma was attached to them. A later passage from the *Ṛg Veda* des-

1. *varṇāśramavyavasthāśca na tadāsanna saṃkaraḥ; na lipsante hi tā'nyonyaṃ-nānugṛhṇanti caiva hi. Vā.* P., i, VIII.60 ; cf. *Digha Nikāya*, Aggaññasutta.

2. Carl Darling, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, for leather (*carman*) see p. 40, for weaving, p. 408, for *takṣan* pp. 589-90, and for plaiting pp. 621-622. Cf. Childe, *The Aryans*, p. 86.

3. Childe, *The Aryans*, pp. 86 and 92.

4. *RV*, IV. 35.6, 36.5 ; VI. 32.1.

5. *yé dhīvāno rathakārā karmāraya manīṣiṇaḥ ; upastiṅparṇa máhyam trāṃ sárvāṅkṛṇvabhito jánān. AV*, III.5.6.

Bloomfield's tr. is followed here. Whitney gives the same tr. as Bloomfield, but takes *upastins* in the sense of subjects after Sāyaṇa. Sā. takes *dhīvānaḥ* and *manīṣiṇaḥ* as separate nouns meaning fishermen and intellectuals. The *Paipp.* text is slightly different ; *ye takṣāṇo rathakārā karmārā ye manīṣiṇaḥ ; sarvāṃs tān parṇa randhayopastiṅ kṛṇu medinam.* III. 13.7.

6. Presumably he was the head of the village both for civil purposes and military operations. *VI*, i, 247.

7. *AV*, III. 5.7.

cribes the carpenter as one who usually bends over his work till his back aches.[1] This may convey some idea of the difficult nature of his work, but implies no contempt for it. That the carpenters were a low caste, or formed a separate class of the people is certainly not true of Vedic times.[2] But the smith (*karmāra*), the carpenter (*taksan*), the tanner (*carmamna*)[3], the weaver and others, whose occupations were quite dignified in the *Ṛg Veda* and apparently practised by respected members of the *viś*, came to be reckoned as śūdra in the Pāli texts.[4] It is likely that non-Āryans also pursued these crafts independently,[5] but there is no doubt that many descendants of Āryan artisans, who stuck to the old professions, were relegated to the position of the śūdras.

The earliest speculation regarding the origin of the four varṇas is to be found in the mythical story of creation embodied in the *Puruṣasūkta* (hymn of man) of the *Ṛg Veda*. This is considered as an interpolation in the tenth book of that collection. But it is reproduced with slight changes in the later Vedic literature,[6] and in the traditions of the epic,[7] Purāṇas[8] and Dharmaśāstras.[9] It states that the brāhmaṇa emanated from the mouth of the primeval man, the kṣatriya from his arms, the vaiśya from his thighs and the śūdra from his feet.[10] Either it shows that the śūdras were supposed to belong to the same stock, and hence were a section of the Āryan community, or it represents an attempt to find a common mythical origin for the heterogenous brāhmaṇical society. In point of time the Puruṣasūkta version may be ascribed to the end of the period of the *Atharva Veda*,[11] in which it occurs in the latest portion.[12] It seems to provide a

1. *RV*, I. 105.18.
2. *VI*, i, 297.
3. *RV*, VIII. 5. 38.
4. *VI*, ii. 265-6.
5. cf. Fick, *The Social Organization in N. E. India*, pp. 326-7.
6. *Pañc. Br.*, V. I. 6-10 ; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, XXXI, 11 ; *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, III. 12.5.&6.
7. *Mbh*, XII. 73. 4-8.
8. *Vāyu P.*, i. VIII. 155-9 ; *Mārk.P.*, ch.49 ; *Viṣṇu* P, i. Ch. VI.
9. *Vas. Dh. S.*, IV.2 ; *Bau. Dh.S.*, I.10.19.5-6 ; cf. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I. 1. 1.7; *Manu*, I.31 ; *Yāj.*, III. 126.
10. *RV*, X. 90.12.
11. *AV*, XIX.6.6.
12. Whitney, *HOS*, vii, p. CXLI ; viii, 895-898.

theoretical justification for the disintegration of tribal society into classes. Already in the Ṛg Vedic period division of labour had gone a long way. But although members of the same family worked as poet, physician and grinder,[1] this did not involve any social differentiation. Towards the end of the period of the *Atharva Veda*, however, differentiations of functions tended to develop into differentiations of rank, and tribes and clans gradually disintegrated into social classes. It appears that the Śūdra tribe, or sections of the Āryans employed in servile work, sank to the position of the fourth varṇa, and in this sense the tradition of the common origin of the four varṇas may have an element of truth. But it does not represent the whole truth. It is possible that in subsequent times the descendants of the Āryan śūdras went on multiplying in the new fertile Gangetic settlements, but from the Vedic period onwards large numbers of aborigines of varying stocks were successively incorporated in the śūdra varṇa.[2] Obviously the old tradition of the common origin of the varṇas could not explain the accession of the non-Āryan tribes to the brāhmaṇical fold, but it could serve as a useful fiction. It could help to assimilate and keep the hetrogenous elements together, and, in so far as the śūdras were supposed to have been born from the feet of the first man, it could justify their servile position in brāhmaṇical society.

When do the śūdras first appear as a social class meant for the service of the three higher varṇas? Ṛg Vedic society had some male and female slaves who acted as domestic servants, but they were not so considerable as to constitute the servile varṇa of the śūdras. The first and the only reference to the śūdras as a social class in the *Ṛg Veda* is to be found in the *Puruṣasūkta* passage already referred to, which recurs in the nineteenth book of the *Atharva Veda*.[3] In the same book there are two other passages, which also seem to refer to the existence of four varṇas. In one of them prayer is made to the *darbha* (grass) to make the

1. *RV*, IX.112. 3.
2. Oldenberg, *ZDMG*, li, 286.
3. *AV*, XIX.6.6.

worshipper dear to brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, śūdra and ārya.[1] Here, Ārya probably stands for vaiśya. In the second passage is expressed a desire to become dear to gods, to kings and to both sūdra and ārya.[2] It appears that here gods stand for brāhmaṇas and āryas for vaiśyas.[3] We have to bear in mind that all these passages occur in the nineteenth book, which, along with the twentieth, forms a supplement to the main collection of the *Atharva Veda*.[4] An earlier passage mentions a charm made by brāhmaṇa, rājanya or śūdra and includes a spell that it may recoil on the maker.[5] This belongs to the second grand division (Book VIII-XII) of the *Atharva Veda*, which, according to Whitney, is 'palpably of hieratic origin.'[6] This suggests that the varṇa system developed under priestly influence. The only other reference relevant to our purpose, which, on the basis of Whitney, can be assigned to the early period of the *Atharva Veda*, mentions brāhmaṇa, rājanya and vaiśya,[7] but leaves out the śūdra. It is evident then that the śūdras appear as a social class only towards the end of the period of the *Atharva Veda*, when the *Puruṣasūkta* version of their origin may have been inserted into the tenth book of the *Ṛg Veda*.

One would like to know why the fourth varṇa came to be called śūdras. It appears that just as the common European word 'slave' and the Sanskrit 'dāsa' were derived from the names of conquered peoples, so also the word śūdra was derived from a conquered tribe of that name. There is no doubt that Śudra existed as a tribe in the fourth century B. C., for Diodoros records the advance of Alexander against a tribe called Sodrai,[8] who occupied portions of modern Sind. The existence of some of the tribes mentioned by the Greek writers can be traced back

1. *AV*, XIX.32.8 ; *Paipp.*, XII.4.8.
2. *AV*. XIX.62.1 ; *Paipp.*, II.32.5.
3. Whitney's note on the translation of *AV*, XIX.62.1; *HOS*, viii, 1003.
4. Whitney quoted *supra*, p. 28.
5. *AV.*, X.1.3.
6. *HOS*, vii, p. CLV.
7. *AV*, V.17.9; *Paipp* , IX.16.7.
8. McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 293. Arrian mentions Sogdoi (*Ibid.*, p. 157), which may be wrong. Sydroi are again clearly mentioned by Ptolemy (VI.20.3) as inhabiting the central potion of Archosia, which covered a considerable portion of eastern Afghanistan and the eastern frontier of which was skirted by the Indus. (McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 317).

to a much earlier period. For instance, the Abastanoi of Arrian (called Sambastai by Diodoros) may be indentified with the Ambaṣṭhas of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,[1] which mentions an Ambaṣṭha king.[2] The same case may apply to the Śūdra tribe, and thus it may be possible to trace the śūdra varṇa of *circa* 10th century B. C. from the Śūdra tribe of the 4th century B. C.

Three references to śūdra in the earliest portion of the *Atharva Veda* can be interpreted in this light. They belong, according to Whitney, to the first grand division of the *Atharva Veda* (Book I-CVII) which is 'in very large measure of popular origin' and is by all odds 'the most characteristic part' of that collection.[3] In two of them the worshipper desires to see everybody whether Ārya or Śūdra with the help of a herb, in order to detect a sorcerer.[4] There is no mention of brāhmaṇa or rājanya in this connection. The question is whether the Ārya and Śūdra represent here two social classes (varṇas) or two tribal groups. The latter supposition seems to be plausible. The earlier opposition between Ārya and Dāsa or Dasyu is replaced by one between Ārya and Śūdra. It is worth stressing that these references do not give any idea of the social distance or disabilities, which are implicit in the conception of varṇa. They may be compared with another passage from the same collection which speaks of Ārya and Dāsa, and in which it is claimed by the priest or Varuṇa that no Dāsa or Āryan can damage the course he maintans.[5] Mention has been made of similar passages in the *Ṛg Veda* in which the worshipper desires to overcome his enemies, both Āryans and Dāsas or Dasyus. The one obstacle in the way of the correct interpretation by brāhmaṇical commentators of such Vedic texts as have direct bearing on social relations has been the tendency to look ahead to later developments. An example is the meaning of the words ārya and dāsa in the *Ṛg Veda*. Sāyaṇa takes *ārya* as the member of the first there

1. *PHAI*, p. 255.
2. *Ait.Br.*, VIII.21.
3. *JOS*, vii, pp. CXLVIII and CLV.
4. *tāyāhaṃ sārvaṃ paśyāmi yāśca śūdrā utāryaḥ.* *AV*, IV. 20.4, 8; *Paipp.*, VIII.6.8.
5. *AV*, V.11.3.

varṇas, and *dāsa* as the *śūdra*;[1] this is obviously based on the later division of society into four varṇas, which Sāyaṇa's interpretation is meant to justify. Likewise in the Atharva Vedic reference under discussion Sāyaṇa explains *ārya* as a member of the three varṇas,[2] which naturally makes *śūdra* the representative of the fourth. But it becomes very hard to interpret earlier texts, if they are approached with the later conception of ārya and śūdra as developed in the Dharmaśāstras.

That the Śūdras appear as a tribe in the earliest part of the *Atharva Veda* can be also inferred from the third reference, in which the fever *takman* is asked to attack a wanton śūdra woman along with the Mujavants, Balhikas and Mahāvṛṣas.[3] All these peoples seem to have been inhabitants of north-eastern India,[4] where, in the *Mahābhārata*, the Śūdra tribe is described as living, along with the Ābhīras.[5] Another verse also repeats the desire that the fever should go to the foreign people.[6] All this would suggest that the context in which the Śūdra woman is mentioned relates to the attitude of hostility of the Āryans of the period of the *Atharva Veda* towards the foreign tribes inhabiting north-western India. And hence the word *śūdrā* here probably means a woman of the Śūdra tribe. In the parallel passage from the *Paippalāda* recension *śūdrā* is replaced by *dāsī*,[7] which shows that in the author's view the terms were interchangeable. Therefore, the occurence of the term *śūdra* in what is regarded as the earliest and the most characteristic part of the *Atharva Veda*, should be understood not in the sense of varṇa, but in that of a tribe, which suits the contexts better.

Coupled with the Ābhīras the Śūdras are repeatedly mentioned as a tribe in the *Mahābhārata*, which contains traditions that may look back at least to the 10th century B. C. This epic makes a clear distinction between the śūdra class (kula), which

1. Comm. to *RV*, II. 12.4.
2. Comm. to *AV*, IV. 20.4.
3. *AV*, V. 22. 7 and 8.
4. Cf. *VA*, pp. 258-9.
5. *śūdrābhīrāīha daradāh kāśmīrāh paśubhih saha. Mbh*, VI. 10. 66, 46 where *aparandhrāh* in the Cr. Edn. is a mistake for *aparāntāh*
6. *AV*, V. 22, 12, 14.
7. *Paipp.*, XIII.1.9.

is mentioned along with the kulas of kṣatriya and vaiśya,[1] and the śūdra tribe, which is mentioned with the Ābhīras, Daradas Tukhāras, Pahlavas etc.[2] As a tribe the Śūdras find place in the list of peoples conquered by Nakula in the course of his all round victorious march (*dig-vijaya*),[3] and in that of those sending presents to Yudhiṣṭhira on the occasion of his great coronation sacrifice (*rājasūya*).[4] In determining the chronology of these peoples, a distinction has to be made between Śūdras and Ābhīras, who probably existed at the time of the Bhārata war, and others, such as Śakas, Tukhāras, Pahlavas, Romakas, Chīnas and Hūnas, whose names were later[5] interpolated into the list. Non-Indian sources of the first few centuries preceding or succeeding the Christian era give no indication of the foreign connections of the Śūdras and Ābhīras. There is hardly anything to support the view that the Ābhīras came to India in the early centuries of the Christian era. It appears that they existed as a tribe at the time of the Bhārata war[6] and in the period of chaos, which followed the aftermath of the great war, they spread themselves over the Panjāb.[7] The repeated mention of the Śūdras along with the Ābhīras would suggest that they were an old tribe flourishing at the time of the war. This fits in well with the interpretation of the term śūdra in the sense of tribe in the earliest part of the *Atharva Veda*.

The next question is whether the Śūdras were an Āryan or pre-Āryan tribe, and if Āryan, when did they come to India? Contradictory views have been expressed on the ethnological classification of the Śūdra tribe. Formerly it was maintained that the Śūdras were an earlier wave of Āryans ;[8] later it came to be held that they were a stem of the pre-Āryan

1. *Ibid.*, II. 29. 8-9. Pahlavas and Barbaras are also mentioned. *Ibid.*, II, 29. 15.
2. *Mbh.*, VI.10.65.
3. *Ibid.*, VI.10 66.
4. *Ibid.*, II.47.7.
5. *Ibid.*, II.47.7 ff.
6. P. Banerjee, *JBRS*, xli, 160-1.
7. Budha Prakash, *JBRS*, xl, 255, 260-3.
8. Weber, *ZDMG*, iv, 301, fn. 2, cf. Roth, *ZDMG*, i, 84.

peoples.[1] No evidence has been adduced in support of either view, but in the light of the available data one may be inclined to think that the Śūdra tribe had some affinity with the Āryans. It is interesting to note that they are always bracketted with the Ābhīras,[2] who spoke an Āryan dialect called Ābhīri.[3] The fact that the people of the śūdra class could understand the Āryan speech in the period of the Brāhmaṇas also may suggest, though remotely, that the Śūdra tribe was acquainted with the Āryan language. Further, the Śūdras have never been mentioned in lists of the pre-Āryan peoples, such as Draviḍas, Pulindas, Śabaras etc. They are always located in the north-west,[4] which, in later times, was an area mainly occupied by the Āryans.[5] The Ābhīras and the Śūdras were settled near the Sarasvati.[6] It is stated that, because of her hostility towards them, the Sarasvatī vanished into the desert.[7] These references are significant, for along with the Dṛṣadvatī the Sarasvatī marked one of the boundaries of the region known as Ārya-deśa. Reference has already been made to the *Dahae*, the Iranian parallel to Indian *Dāsa*, but it is difficult to establish such an equation in the case

1. Fick, *SONI*, p. 315; Keith, *CHI*, i, 86; Lassen, *Ind Alt.*, ii, 174 cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, xviii, 85-86 and 255. Zimmer identifies the Śūdras of Ptolemy with Brāhūī (*Alt. Leb.*, p.435), but there seems to be no basis for such a supposition. cf. Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 548, fn. 3. Pargiter thinks that Śūdras and Ābhīras were considerably intermixed and closely connected aboriginal races (*Mārk.P.*, Tr., pp. 313-14, fn.).

2. *Mbh.*, VI. 10. 45 and 46; 65 and 66; in the critical edition of the *Mbh.*, VII.19.7, *śūrābhīra* seems to be a wrong reading. It should be *śūdrābhīrāḥ* as found in other Mss. (fn. on VII.19.7). Śūdras and Ābhīras are again mentioned together in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali (Pat. on *Pa.*, I.2.72.6).

3. The earliest specimens of *Ābhīrokti* are found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata, a work of the second or third century A.D. (P.D.Gune, Introduction to *Bhavisayattakahā*, pp. 50-51). These are clearly very much allied to Sanskrit.

4. The *Mbh.* list in practically the same form occurs in the Purāṇas, in which the Śūdras are mentioned as a people along with the Ābhīras, Kālatoyakas, Aparāntas, Pahlavas (wrongly mentioned as Pallavas in the Cr. Edn. VI. 10.66) and others. *Mārk. P.*, ch.57. 35-36 and *Matsya P.* ch. 113.40. In the Gupta period the Śūdra tribe seems to have held a definite territory, which is listed in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (IV.24.18) along with the territories Saurāṣṭra, Avanti and Arbuda. There is no justification for Dikshitar's reading as *'Śūra* (*Gupta Polity*, pp. 3-4), for the text clearly mentions *Śūdra* territory.

5. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, ii, 355-357.

6. *Śūdrābhīragaṇāścaiva ye cāśritya sarasvatīm. Mbh.*, II. 29.9.

7. *Śūdrābhīrān prati dveṣād yatra naṣṭā sarasvatī. Mbh.* (Cal.), IX. 37. 1.

of Śūdra. It has been doubtfully suggested that Śūdra may be equated with the Greek word *kūdrós*,[1] which is used by Homer (*circa* 10th cen. -9th cen. B. C.) in the sense of great, and is applied as an epithet generally to divine beings and rarely to mortals.[2] In later times in India śūdra was a term of opprobrium applied to people disliked by the brāhmaṇas; on the contrary it was a term of approbation in Homeric Greece. This may be explained very tentatively by suggesting that members of a hypothetical Indo-European Kudra tribe became important among the leaders of the tribes which later invaded Greece, while those of this tribe who entered India were subjected by their fellow invaders. That the same term carries inverted meanings in different contexts is clear from the example of *asura*. While Asura was associated with evil in India, his prototype Ahura was a god in Iran. The analogy may apply to the use of the term śūdra in India and Greece but cannot be regarded as definitive unless it is proved that the *kūdrói* were a tribe in Greece. Nevertheless, on the basis of all that has been said above, it is probable that the Śūdras, like the Dāsas, were a people allied to the Indo-Āryan stock.

If they were allied to the Indo-Āryans, when did they come to India? It has been suggested that they were an earlier wave of Āryan immigrants.[3] But since they are not mentioned in the *Rg Veda*, it is likely that they represent a later thrust of foreign tribes into north-western India towards the close of the Rg Vedic period. On the basis of archaeological evidence it is possible that the movement of peoples into India was a continuous process lasting for nearly a millenium after 2000 B. C.[4], a hypothesis which is also supported by linguistic evidence.[5] It is, therefore, probable that the Śūdras came to India towards the end of the second millenium B. C., when they were defeated by the Vedic Āryans and were gradually absorbed into the later Vedic society as the fourth varṇa.

1. Wackernagel, "Indoiranisches", *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1918, 410-411.
2. *s.v.* kūdrós, Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, i.
3. Weber, *ZDMG*, iv.301, fn.2; cf. Roth, *ZDMG*, i, 84.
4. Stuart Piggott, *Antiquity*, iv, *No.* 96, 218.
5. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, p. 31.

It has been asserted that the kṣatriyas were reduced to the position of śūdras as a result of their long struggle with the brāhmaṇas, who ultimately deprived their adversaries of the right to the *upanayana* (investiture with sacred thread).[1] On the basis of a solitary tradition occurring in the *Śānti Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, that Paijavana was a śūdra king, it is claimed that śūdras were kṣatriyas in the beginning.[2] Such a view seems to be without any foundation in facts. Firstly, kṣatriyas as a well-defined varṇa with their rights and duties did not exist in the Ṛg Vedic period. Fighting and management of the common affairs were the concern of the whole tribe and not confined to a group of chosen warriors. From the very beginning the slowly emerging groups of warriors and priests co-operated in leading the viś in their fight against the Āryan as well as non-Āryan peoples. As time passed, the warriors bestowed on the priests generous gifts, and the religious rituals were much elaborated, so that the power of the priests who performed them and of the warriors who patronized them was much strengthened as against that of the common people. Secondly, in spite of the echoes of the struggle between priests and warriors during the later Vedic period, as reflected in the stories of Paraśurāma and Viśvāmitra, there is nothing to show that the *upanayana* formed the issue, and that it was decided against the kṣatriyas. Perhaps the struggle centred round the question of social supremacy, which determined the nature of the privileges to be enjoyed by them. There was some dispute regarding the brāhmaṇical monopoly of knowledge, which was successfully challenged by the kṣatriyas. It seems that Aśvapati Kaikeya and Pravāhaṇa Jaivali were not improbably teachers of the brāhmaṇas.[3] Kṣatriya rulers such as Janaka of Mithilā contributed to the growth of the Upaniṣadic thought, and the kṣatriya ruler Viśvāmitra climbed to priesthood. In north-eastern India the kṣatriya revolt reached its climax with the preachings of Gautama Buddha and Vardhamāna Mahā-

1. Ambedkar, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-42. It was Lassen who drew attention to the fact that the ancient king Sudās was called śūdra in the *Mbh. Ind. Alt.*, i, 969.

3. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, NS, xxiii, 45.

vīra, who claimed social primacy for the kṣatriyas and gave the next place to the brāhmaṇas. The real issue was, who would get the first place in society, brāhmaṇa or kṣatriya? Neither in post-Vedic nor in pre-Mauryan literature is there anything to show that the brāhmaṇas intended to reduce the kṣatriyas to the third or fourth varṇa, or that the kṣatriyas wanted to do the same to the brāhmaṇas.

Thirdly, it is wrong to think that in the beginning the loss of the *upanayana* was the decisive test of a śūdra. In this case modern court decisions[1] cannot serve as a guide for conditions at the time when the śūdra class came into being. Loss of the *upanayana* in the case of the śūdra, as will be shown later, is to be found only from the end of the later Vedic period, and, even so, it was not the only disability imposed on him as a mark of his servility but one of several. As will be noticed later, the loss of the *upanayana* was not the cause of the conversion of Āryans into śūdras but the consequence of their having sunk to the lower orders as a result of the rise of economic and social inequalities.

Fourthly, it is difficult to vouch for the authenticity of the tradition in the *Śānti Parvan* that Paijavana was a śūdra. He has been identified with Sūdās, the head of the Bhārata tribe, and it is argued that this famous hero of the Battle of Ten Kings was a śūdra.[2] There is nothing in the Vedic literature to support his view, and the *Śānti Parvan* tradition is not corroborated by any other source, epic or Purāṇic. The tradition says that Śūdra Paijavana performed sacrifices, and occurs in a context where it is stated that the śūdras can perform five great sacrifices and make gifts.[3] It is difficult to judge whether the tradition was true or false, but clearly it was meant to serve as a precedent for śūdras making gifts and sacrifices, which, as will be shown later, was in keeping with the liberal attitude of the *Śānti Parvan*. It may be also pointed out that in later times the term śūdra or vṛṣala was applied indiscriminately by the brāhmaṇas to anybody who went against them. We do not know

1. Ambedkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-90.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
3. *Mbh.*, XII.60.38-40.

therefore according to him the śūdra is 'an unintelligent fellow meant for manual labour.'[1] It is extraordinary that he should have derived the term *śūdra* from two roots, and that too hardly without any old etymological basis. The meaning which he labours to ascribe to this term only betrays the traditional attitude towards the śūdra, but does not throw any light on his origin.

The miserable or negligible status of the śūdra varṇa at the time of its origin is hardly born out by the picture of society in the *Ṛg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. Nowhere in the collections is there any evidence of restrictions regarding food and marriage either between the Dāsa and the Āryan, or between the śūdra and the higher varṇas.[2] The only early reference, which implies such social distance between the varṇas, is to be found in the *Atharva Veda*, where it is claimed that the brāhmaṇa enjoys the right to become the first husband of a woman as against the rājanya and vaiśya.[3] The śūdra does not come in for notice, probably because his varṇa did not exist at that stage. There is nothing to show that dāsas or śūdras were considered as impure, or that their touch imparted pollution to the food or the body of of the members of the higher varṇas.[4]

This discussion on the origin of the śūdra varṇa may be summed up by stating that large sections of people, Āryans and pre-Āryans, were reduced to that position, partly through external and partly through internal conflicts.[5] Since the conflicts centred mainly round the possession of cattle, and perhaps latterly of land, those who were dispossessed of these and impoverished came to be reckoned as the fourth class in the new society. The view that the śūdra varṇa was made up of the pre-Āryans seems to be as one-sided and exaggerated as the view that they mainly consisted of the Āryan peoples.[6] The generally held sociolo-

1. Surya Kanta, "Kīkaṭa, Phaligā, and Paṇi," *S. K. Belvalkar Commemoration Volume*, p. 44.
2. It is wrongly stated by N.N. Ghosh that such restrictions between the Āryan and the Dāsa are vouchsafed by the *Ṛg Veda*. *IC*, xii, 179.
3. *AV*, V. 17.8-9.
4. Cf Dutt, *Origin and Growth of the Caste system*, pp. 20 and 62.
5. Gheld, *Ethnology of the Mahābhārata*, pp. 89-95; B. N. Dutt, *Studies in Indian Social Polity*, pp. 28-30; Ambedkar, *Who were the Śūdras*, p. 239.
6. Cf. *VI*, ii.265.

gical theory that a division into classes is always originally connected with ethnical dissimilarities[1] only partly explains the origin of the śūdras and dāsas (slaves). It is more than likely that dāsas and śūdras were respectively named after tribes of these names having affinities with the Indo-Āryans, but in course of time they came to include large groups of the pre-Āryan and degraded Āryan populations. It seems fairly clear that in the early Vedic period there was no considerable śūdra or slave population, and that the śūdras did not suffer from those disabilities which gradually fell on them from the late Vedic period onwards.

1. Landtman, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

CHAPTER III

AMBIGUOUS POSITION

(c. 1000-c. 600 B. C.)

The later Vedic literature, which is almost the only source for the study of the position of the śūdras during that period, mainly deals with rituals, pervading all aspects of the life of the people. Every important public or individual act is accompanied by an appropriate ritual, which not seldom takes into account the fact that society was divided into four varṇas.

Information gleaned from the rituals mainly relates to the land of the Kuru-Pañcālas, where the major part of the later Vedic literature was composed.[1] This literature roughly covers the period from *circa* 1000 to *circa* 600 B. C., and presupposes various phases of social development, differing according to the times to which a particular text can be assigned. Thus the collections (Saṃhitās) of the Black school of the *Yajus* are earlier than those of the White school.[2] Of the Brāhmaṇas the *Śatapatha* and the *Aitareya*, which make important statements on the inter-relation between the varṇas, are 'comparatively modern', while the *Pañcaviṃśa* and *Taittirīya* are the most ancient.[3] Even later than the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*,[4] and so is the *Kauṣītaki* or *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*.[5] In some cases it is difficult to draw a line between the Śrautasūtras and the Brāhmaṇas; thus the *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* may be regarded as a late Brāhmaṇa.[6] The *Āpastamba Srautasūtra* seems to be similarly old.[7] In addition to these, the dates of other principal Śrautasūtras (viz. *Āśvalāyana*,

1. Winternitz, *HIL*, i, 195-6. Keith says that the home of the *Taittirīya* school was the middle country, as was the home of the *Kāṭhaka*, the *Maitrāyaṇi*, and even the *Vājasaneyi* and the *Śatapatha*. *HOS*, xviii, p. XCIII.
2. Weber, *Ind. Lit.*, p. 86.
3. Wackernagel, *Altind. Grammatik*, i, pp. XXX-XXXI; Keith, *HOS*, xxv, 44.
4. Keith, *HOS*, xxv, 46.
5. Winternitz, *HIL*, i, 191.
6. B. K. Ghosh, *VA*, p. 235.
7. Keith, *HOS*, xviii, p. XLI.

Kātyāyana, *Sāṅkhāyana*, *Lātyāyana*, *Drāhyāyaṇa* and *Satyāṣāḍha*) have been fixed between 800 and 400 B. C.[1] At present the number of the Upanisads exceeds even two hundred, but only six of them can be ascribed to the pre-Buddhist period.[2] In examining the material from the different strata of later Vedic literature regard has to be paid also to the relative dating of the various parts of individual texts.[3] Moreover, in the later Saṃhitās, and especially in the Brāhmanas, we find far more frequent use of optatives than in the *Ṛg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*.[4] Hence many statements in the later Vedic literature are not in the form of the record of facts that actually occurred, but are to be interpreted as instructions and advice. But occasional evidence for things which may have happened can be culled from the narrative portion of the *Mahābharata*, which reflects happenings in the later Vedic period.[5]

Since the śūdras appear in post-Vedic times mainly as the serving class, we will begin the study of their position in the later Vedic period with an inquiry into their economic conditions. In an early reference they are described as being in possession of cattle, which could be taken away by the people of the higher varṇas for sacrifice.[6] This is corroborated by another reference in an early Brāhmaṇa, in which the śūdra is represented as being born without god and sacrifice, but owning many cattle (*bahupaśuḥ*).[7] It is obvious that such śūdras, who held independent property in cattle, which seem still to have been the chief form of wealth, may not have been under the necessity to serve others.

Nevertheless, there are some references to the functions of the śūdras as a serving class. It is stated in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* that the śūdra is created from the feet of Prajāpati without any god, and therefore the lords of the house are his gods

1. *VA*, p. 476.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
3. Here it is not possible to do more than refer to the opinions of generally accepted authorities.
4. Macdonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, p. 118.
5. Cf. *PHAI*, pp. 7-8.
6. *MS*, IV. 2. 7 and 10.
7. *Pañc. Br.*, VI. 1. 11.

and he is to earn his living by washing feet.[1] In other words, according to a later source he has to live by serving people of higher varṇas.[2] The former source further informs us that, as a result of the Horse Sacrifice (*aśvamedha*), the nourisher vaiśya becomes wealthy, and the rising śūdra becomes an expert worker.[3] It is not known whether the term *karmakartā* is used here in the sense of hired labourer, a meaning always attached to a similar term *karmakara* in post-Vedic literature.[4] In an early Upaniṣad, however, the śūdra is called Pūṣan or the nourisher,[5] a title (*poṣayiṣṇuḥ*) applied to the vaiśya in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*.[6] This would, then, suggest that he was the tiller of the soil,[7] engaged in sustaining and producing activities for the nourishment of society. Probably in the earlier part of this period, like the vaiśyas, he paid part of his produce as taxes, an obligation from which he was freed in post-Vedic times.

But the impression that the śūdras constituted the labouring class is gained from several other references. In the *puruṣamedha* (human sacrifice) a brāhmaṇa is to be sacrificed to the priesthood, a rājanya to the nobility, a vaiśya to the Maruts (the class of peasants), and a śūdra to toil (*tupase*).[8] It was thought that the śūdra symbolised hard work. In the list of sacrificial victims, members of four varṇas are followed by those of various occupations such as chariot-maker, carpenter, potter, smith, jeweller, herdsman, shepherd, farmer, brewer, fisherman and hunter, in addition to certain peoples such as Niṣāda, Kirāta, Parṇaka, Paulkasa and Bainda,[9] who presumably were included in the broad term of

1. *śūdro' anuṣṭupchandā veśmapatidevas; tasmād u pādāvanejyenaiva jijiviṣati. Jai. Br.*, I. 68-69.

2. *suśrūṣā śūdrasyetareṣām varṇānām. Satyāṣāḍha Śr. Su.*, XXVI. 1.7, but this is not to be found in any other early *Śr. S.*

3. *utthātā śudro dakṣaḥ karmakartā. Jai. Br.*, II, 266. Perhaps there is no parallel for this passage in other Brāhmaṇas.

4. *Karmakara* occurs in *Tai. Br.* III, 11. 10.3, in the sense of a ṛtvik priest and not as a hired labourer. There seems to be no mention of *karmakara* in other Brāhmaṇas.

5. *Br. Up.*, I. 4. 13.

6. II, 266.

7. Mookerji, *AIE*, p. 158.

8. *VS*, XXX. 5; *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 6. 2. 10; *Tai. Br.*, III, 4. 1.1.

9. *VS*, XXX. 6-21; *Tai. Br.*, III. 4. 2-17.

the śūdra.[1] The list, therefore, shows that although the crafts had increased in number, they were no longer practised by the members of the viś. The idea was gaining ground that śūdras included artisans and workers of various kinds.

What was the nature of relations between the śūdra workers and their employers? The authors of the *Vedic Index* say that slaves were certainly included in the term śūdra.[2] But the number of slaves seems to have been very small. We learn of ten thousands of female slaves, captured from various countries and given away by Aṅga to his brāhmaṇa priest Ātreya.[3] The number is obviously exaggerated and conventional. Āruṇi, the father of Śvetaketu, boasts that he possesses gold, cattle, horses, maidservants (*dāsīs*), retinue and dress, but does not speak of male slaves.[4] Tradition has it that the brāhmaṇas received female slaves at the time of the great coronation sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira,[5] which may be ascribed to the later Vedic period. Clearly, then, during this period female slaves were owned on a considerable scale by the ruling chiefs and priests, but the same cannot be said of male slaves. The term *dāsa* is mentioned in the *Aitareya* and *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇas*[6] but not in the sense of a slave. It is remarkable that, in the list of words for servants (*paricaraṇakarmāṇaḥ*) given in the *Nighaṇṭu*,[7] there is no mention of *dāsa*, although there occur ten synonyms for servants. Perhaps the number of male slaves was so negligible as not to attract any notice. This would naturally rule out the possibility of male śūdras being employed as slaves on any considerable scale. Therefore Keith's statement, that in the period of the Brāhmaṇas for the peasant working in his own fields was

1. *VI*, ii, 267.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *deśād-deśāt samoḍhānāṃ sarvāsām ādhyaduhitṛnām; daśādadāt sahasrāṇi ātreyo niṣkakaṇṭhyaḥ. Ait. Br.*, VIII. 22. The chapter is a part of the later portion of this work.

4. *Br. Up.*, VI. 2. 7. There is no mention of land either.

5. *Mbh.* (Cal.), II. 33. 52. Karṇa, the sūta king of Aṅga, is found offering a hundred Māgadhī slave-girls decked and trained in music and similar accomplishments. *Mbh.* (Cal.), VIII. 38.7. 18.

6. *Ait. Br.*, VI. 18-19.; *Gopatha Br.*, II. 4.2., 6.1.

7. III. 5.

being substituted the landowner cultivating his estate by means of slave labour,[1] may not represent the true state of affairs.

Slaves working on land are first heard of in the Śrauta-sūtras, which were composed towards the end of the Vedic period. One of them informs us that two slaves are to be given away along with grain, plough and cattle,[2] suggesting thereby that slaves were employed in ploughing and could be freely disposed of by their masters. But in several passages the practice of making gifts of land and of the people working on it is looked upon with disfavour. Thus it is stated that at the *aśvamedha* sacrifice the sacrificial fee could not include land and men working on it (*bhūmipurusavarjam*).[3] Again, in connection with the gifts in the one day (*ekāha*) sacrifice, it is laid down that land and śūdras could not be given away (*bhūmiśūdravarjam*).[4] There is, however, the alternative that sometimes the śūdras could be also given away,[5] but the commentary adds that this can be done only in case of those who are born slaves.[6] There are two similar references from the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*. One of them says that in the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice land with men is given away as sacrificial fee.[7] One other is not clear, and perhaps suggests that in the sacrifice of all (*sarvamedha*) land is given 'along with' the people.[8] These references indicate a new social development towards the close of the Vedic period. Śūdras were employed as slaves working on lands owned by individuals (mostly ruling chiefs), and they could be given away as gifts along with the land itself, although this did not go without challenge from the authors of the *Āśvalāyana* and *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtras*.

It is held that śūdras were serfs in the Vedic period.[9] The term serf denotes one who is attached to the soil of his master.

1. *CHI*, i, 128. Cf Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, p. 87, fn. 9.
2. *...dāsamithunau dhānyapaṭālyaṃ sīraṃ dhenuriti. Lāṭyā. Śr. S.*, VIII. 4. 14.
3. *Aśva Śt S.*, X. 10,10.
4. *Kā. Śr. S.*, XXII. 10.
5. *Śūdradānaṃ vā darśanāvirodhābhyām. Ibid.*, XXII. 11.
6. *na ca virodha garbhadāsasya* Comm. to *Kā. Śr. S.*, XXII. 11.
7. *sahapuruṣaṃ ca dīyate. Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XVI. 14.18.
8. *sahabhūmi ca dīyate.* The comm. adds *sapuruṣaṃ ca. Ibid.*, XVI. 15.20.
9. *VI*, ii, 389.

He owns a patch of land for which he pays taxes to his master and works on his fields, but can be transferred along with the land to other owners. This interpretation of the word śūdra does not quite suit the relevant references. Firstly, individual ownership of land in the Vedic period was of a very limited nature. Ownership implies free disposal of property, but there are no examples of land grants in the Saṃhitās. There is one such example, however, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, in which a whole village is granted by the king Jānaśruti to Raikva.[1] Another instance is to be found in two later Brāhmaṇas.[2] They inform us that land could be given away only with the consent of the clan, and even there the earth refused to be transferred.[3] In the earlier period there is no example of śūdras being given away with the land. The development is to be found in some of the Śrautasūtras, but according to a commentary such śūdras appear to be born slaves (*garbhadāsa*)[4] and not serfs attached to the soil. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that in post-Vedic times the śūdras do not appear as peasants paying taxes. In the *vājapeya* ('the drink of strength') sacrifice peasants (viś or vaiśyas) are described as food for the nobility.[5] It is perhaps because of this that the vaiśya is to be afflicted with misery and sin.[6] In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[7] the vaiśya is described as one paying taxes (*balihṛt*) and oppressed at will (*ajayeyyam*). All this would indicate that the vaiśya had to pay part of their products to the rulers who lived on them. Absence of such references in the case of the śūdras shows that they were not supposed to possess any taxable property. In an Upaniṣad Soma is described as eating the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas respectively with his two mouths, the brāhmaṇa and the rājanya.[8] Here the rājanya is represented as paying taxes to the brāhmaṇa, and the vaiśya to the

1. IV. 2. 4-5.
2. *Ait. Br.*, VIII. 21; *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 7. 1.15.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Comm. to *Kā. Śr. S.*, XXII. 11.
5. *vaiśyo' dyamāno na kṣīyate...brāhmaṇasya ca rājanasya cādyo' dharohi sṛṣṭaḥ. Pañc. Br.*, VI. 1. 10; *Śat. Br.*, V. 2. 1. 17; VIII. 7. 1. 2, 2. 2.
6. *Śat. Br.*, V. 1. 5. 28.
7. VII. 29.
8. *Kauṣītaki Up.*, II. 8-9.

rājanya. As usual the śūdra is left out on the ground of his inability to pay.

It is difficult to define the position of the śūdras in the Vedic period in terms of slavery or serfdom. Although the references give the impression of their being the labouring massses, generally they do not seem to have been slaves or serfs owned by individuals. Apparently just as the community exercised some sort of general control over land, so also it exercised similar control over the labouring population. And, in this sense, the śūdras may be compared to the helots of Sparta, with the difference that they were not treated with the same amount of coercion and contempt.

Although in the later Vedic period artisan sections of the viś were reduced to the position of śūdras, there is nothing to show that crafts or agricultural operations in which they were employed were looked upon with contempt. So far as agriculture is concerned, there was a positive attitude of aiding, encouraging and honouring it by applying charms and performing a number of domestic rites.[1] As to the crafts, there is no evidence of contempt even for leather-work.[2] This would suggest that impurity did not arise from the nature of the task, which remained unchanged even in subsequent times. Significantly enough in the Śrautasūtra a ceremonial act was called *śilpa*,[3] a word which also means craft. The absence of contempt for manual labour during the later Vedic period may be likened to a parallel development in Greece, where during the period from Hesiod to Socrates (*cir.* 800-*cir.* 400 B. C.) public conscience was favourably disposed towards it.[4] Respect for manual labour in the later Vedic period probably lingered from the old simple society, in which even the king lent his hand to ploughing.[5]

The śūdras seem to have played a correspondingly important part in the political life of the period. In the formative stage

1. *AV*, III. 24, VI. 142 ; *VS*, IV. 10 ; *Śat. Br.*, I. 6. 1. 1-8.
2. S. K. Das has collected the relevant references. *The Eco. History of Ancient India*, pp. 139-40.
3. *Āśva. Śr. S.*, VIII. 4. 5-8 ; IX. 10. 11, 11.2.
4. *Past and Present*, No. 6, p. 1.
5. Case of Janaka of Videha.

of the Indo-Āryan polity they enjoyed a considerable share in the functions of the state. It is striking that they found place in the exalted body of about a dozen 'high functionaries of the state'[1] called *ratnins* (jewel-holders), which may be compared to the council of twelve, an institution of great antiquity among several Indo-European peoples such as the Old Saxons, Frisians, Celts etc.[2] The *ratnins* were so important that on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifice the king had to repair to their houses to perform the ceremonies of offering jewels to various gods. The list of *ratnins* shows that they included the representatives of all the varṇas.[3] Thus two of the *ratnins*, the *rathakāra* and the *takṣan*, who are mentioned in several texts,[4] belonged to the artisan section of the śūdra varṇa. The fact that all kinds of metals are prescribed as the sacrificial fee[5] in the ceremonies at their homes shows that they owed their importance to their association with metal-working. It has been shown earlier how the king in the *Atharva Veda* tries to secure the aid of the *karmāra* and the *rathakāra*. But in the present list the place of the *karmāra* is taken by the *takṣan*, who, along with the *rathakāra*, may have been in charge of all the activities connected with metal-working and cart-making, without which the Āryan expansion and settlements farther east could not have made any headway. These two *ratnins* are not, however, mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, where their place is taken by the *govikartana* (huntsman) and *pālāgala* (messenger).[6] There are reasons to think that these two also belonged to the śūdra varṇa. The ceremony of offering jewels is followed by an act of expiation on the part of the king, who is considered guilty of having brought the non-sacrificing

1. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, ii, 20.
2. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, p. 370.
3. Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, p. 253.
4. *...takṣarathakārayorgṛhe. MS.* II. 6. 5; *Āp. Śr. S.*, XVIII. 10. 17; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XIII. 4. 8. It is to be noticed that *takṣa* and *rathakāra* are not mentioned in a similar description of *ratnins* in *TS*, I. 8. 9. 1-2 and *KS*, XV. 4.
5. *sarvāyasāni dakṣinā. Ibid.*
6. *Śat. Br.*, V. 3. 1. 10-11.

śūdras into contact with the sacrifice.[1] Sāyaṇa goes too far when he includes even the *senānī* (commander) among the śūdra *ratnins*.[2] In all likelihood the reference to non-sacrificing śūdras applies only to the *pālāgala* and the *govikartana*. That the *pālāgala* was a śūdra can be inferred from the fact that the *pālāgalī* is addressed as a śūdra.[3] At another place the term *pālāgala* is defined as false envoy (*anṛtadūta*)[4]; the quality here ascribed to the *pālāgala* is always in later times associated with the śūdra.[5] The *govikartana*, who is mentioned as a *ratnin* in several other lists besides that of the *Śatapatha*,[6] is specified as 'of low caste' (*hīnajāti*) by Sāyaṇa.[7] Presumably he was the keeper of game and forests and may have been a śūdra. Keith takes *ksattṛ*, one of the *ratnins*, in the sense of a carver[8], which would mean that he also was a śūdra. But this rendering seems to be doubtful, for in the epic *kṣattṛ* means a chamberlain[9], and there is no special reason for believing that the word was used with a different meaning in the Brāhmaṇas. Among the *ratnins* it is *takṣan* who can be better rendered as a carver. Thus it would appear that in some cases artisans, and in other cases herdsmen and messengers, from the śūdra varṇa, were considered important enough to be approached by the king on the occasion of his great coronation sacrifice.

But the position of the śūdra *ratnins* needs further clarification. Firstly, they are not specified by their varṇa name, as

1. *eṣa'etattamaḥ pravišatyetaṃ vā tamaḥ pravišati yadayajñiyānṃ ajñena prasajatyayajñiyānnvā' etadyajñena prasajati śūdrānstvadyāṃsṭu. Śat. Br.* V. 3 2 2-4. The provision for expiation by means of offerings to Soma and Rudra, and Mitra and Bṛhaspati, looks like an attempt to reconcile two opposite views, one earlier and the other later, about the participation of the śūdra in the sacrifice. The king could enter into sacral relations with the śūdra, but the sin arising out of it had to be removed by another rite. It is to be noted that this does not occur in the Black *Yajus* texts or in the other texts of the White *Yajus* (Ghoshal, *Hin.P. L.* i, 133.)

2. *śūdrān senānyādīn*...Comm. to *Śat. Br.*, V. 3. 2. 2.
3. *Śānkh. Śr. S.*, XVI. 4. 4; cf. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 5. 2. 8.
4. *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XVIII. 10. 26.
5. *Ibid.*, VI. 3. 12.
6. *MS*, II. 6. 5; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XVIII. 10. 20; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XIII. 4. 8.
7. Comm. to *Śat. Br.*, V. 3 2. 2-4.
8. He derives it from *ksad* to carve *HOS*, xviii, 120.
9. *s.v.* kṣattṛ, Monier-Williams, *Sansk-Eng. Dict.* Acc. to Sāyana he is the son of a kṣatriya woman by a śūdra.

is to be found in the case of the brāhmaṇa, the rājanya and the vaiśya *ratnins*.[1] Secondly, in respect of powers, functions and representation the scales may have weighed heavily against the śūdra *ratnins*, whose appearance in political rituals in course of time may have been reduced to a matter of form. The number of the śūdra *ratnins* in individual lists varies from two to three.[2] There is nothing to indicate that their presence secured the representation of the whole śūdra varṇa, but certainly some sections of that community could find a place in the polity.

Jayaswal views the ceremony of the offerings of jewels (*ratnahāviṃṣi*) as a great constitutional change inasmuch as the śūdra, "the conquered helot, is now worshipped by the man who is going to become king".[3] This implies that the conquered pre-Āryan masses were deliberately given a high status in the Āryan polity. But it is clear that at least the two śūdra *ratnins*, the *rathakāra* and the *takṣan*, owed their positions not to any deliberate policy of exalting the conquered in the Āryan political organization but to their original membership of the Āryan tribes, which had now disintegrated into varṇas; for in the *Atharva Veda* the *rathakāra* and *karmāra* (whose place is now taken by the *takṣan*) are clearly described as part of the viś (folk) round the king.[4] Their indispensability as skilled workers in metals and chariot-makers may have also contributed to their importance in early society. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that in the sequel the existence of these śūdra *ratnins* gave some reflected importance to the other sections of the śūdra varṇa.

The śūdra's participation in the political life of the period is further evident from the ritual of the game of dice, which is prescribed as a rite in the *rājasūya* sacrifice and presented to us in two versions. In the earlier version, which occurs in the Black *Yajus* texts, the brāhmaṇa, the rājanya, the vaiśya and the śūdra

1. The list of the *ratnins* in the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas has been compiled by Ghoshal on the page facing p 249 in *Historiography and other Essays*.

2. In one list (*MS*, II. 6 5, IV. 3.8) their number is three, and in two lists it is two (*KS*, XV 4; *Śat Br.*, V 3. 1ff.). It is strange that they are not mentioned in the texts of the Black School of the *Yajus* (*TS*, I.8.9.1ff; *Tai. Br.*, I.7. 3).

3. *Hindu Polity*, ii, 21.

4. *AV*, III. 5 6.

participate in a game of dice for the sake of a cow, which is won by the king.[1] In the later version, which occurs in the White *Yajus* texts, the vaiśya and śūdra are eliminated as candidates in competition for the cow, which is staked by the kinsman (*sajāta*) of the king and won for him by the officiating priest (*adhvaryu*).[2] It appears that this contest for the cow was originally a tribal custom to test the sagacity and wit of the leader. It is, therefore, the old tradition of tribal solidarity and homogeneity which accounts for the participation of all the varṇas in the game of the dice. But with the passage of time the character of the ritual changed ; the vaiśya and the śūdra were excluded from the game. Nevertheless, it is significant that in the earlier period even a śūdra could join as a competitor in a game, which formed one of the preliminaries to the formal consecration of the king.

Again, the śūdra appears in another ceremony of the *rājasūya* sacrifice, in which the sacrificer gives first gold to the brāhmaṇa and purchases splendour with it ; then a bow with three arrows to the rājanya and purchases lustre with it; next a goad to the vaiśya with which he purchases nourishment; and finally a pot of beans to the śūdra with which he purchases longevity.[3] Although varṇa distinctions are maintained and śūdras are probably represented as labourers engaged in agriculture, none the less they are brought into contact with the king and are considered capable of conferring longevity on him.

The śūdra is possibly connected with another ceremony of the *rājasūya* sacrifice, in which the newly consecrated king is called on to ascend the four quarters of the sky, when brahma in the east, kṣatra in the south, viś in the west and *phala*, *varcas* and *puṣṭam* in the north are asked to protect him.[4] Jayaswal

1. *tatra paṣṭhauhīṃ vidīvyante brāhmaṇo rājanyo vaiśyaḥ śūdraḥ. Vārāha Śr. S.*, III. 3. 3. 24. *MS*, IV. 4. 6 ; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XVIII. 19. 2-3 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XIII. 6. 29-30.

2. *VS*, X. 29 ; *Śat. Br.*, V. 4.4.19-23; *Kā. Śr. S.*, XV. 7. 7.11-20.

3. *KS*, XXXVIII. 1. This passage has no parallel in *VS*, *Kap. S*, *TS* and *MS*, but it occurs in a modified form in *Tai. Br.*, II. 7.9.1. &2, which mentions the gifts and results but does not bring in the four varṇas. In place of *ojas* it gives *vīryam*. Cf. *Sāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XXIII. 4.21, in which the passage occurs in connection with the *odanasava* oblation.

4. *phala* and *varcas* in *VS*, X. 10-13 ; *bala* and *varcas* in *TS*, I. 8. 13; *puṣṭam* and *phalam* in *MS*, II. 6. 10 ; *puṣṭam* and *varcas* in *KS*, XV. 7.

says that *phala* is evidently a substitute for śūdra.[1] This is not accepted by Ghoshal who takes the ceremony as symbolising the influence of three higher castes in the Vedic polity.[2] It has been also suggested that *phala* denotes industrial classes.[3] In our opinion the term *phala*, which is used in Vedic literature[4] in its literal sense as meaning 'fruit' and not in its later secondary sense as 'result', may not be unconnected with the producing activities of the śūdra, but the same cannot be said of the term *varcas* which means lustre. As to the word *puṣṭam* (nourishment), it is generally associated with the vaiśyas, but in one passage the śūdra is also called pūṣan (nourisher).[5] It may, therefore, be tentatively suggested that the terms *phalam* and *puṣṭam* reflect the producing activities of the śūdra, who is thus indirectly called upon to protect the king in the north.

We know that respectable śūdras were invited to the great coronation sacrifice (*rajasūya*) of Yudhiṣṭhira.[6] The contradictory statement that no non-sacrificing śūdra was present on the occasion[7] probably reflects the later attempt to exclude śūdras from political power. At any rate it seems clear that at least some sections of the śūdras participated in the coronations of kings.

According to a passage of the *Yajus* collections of both the schools,[8] on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifice the king established among the viś (people)[9] prays to Sūrya for the expiation of the sin committed against the arya and the śūdra. Relying on Pāṇini[10] the commentators Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara take the word *arya* in the sense of vaiśya.[11] This shows that not even the king was free to oppress the members of the two lower

1. *Op. cit.*, ii, 29, fn. 2.
2. *Hist. and Essays*, p. 264.
3. S. V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture Through the Ages*, pt. I, p. 11.
4. *VI*, ii. 5[11].
5. *Br. Up.*, I. 4. 13.
6. *viśaśca mānyāṃś ūdrāṃśca sarvānānayateti ca. Mbh.*, II. 30. 41.
7. *na tasyāṃ saṃnidhau śūdraḥ kaścidāsanna cāvrataḥ. Mbh.*, II. 33. 9.
8. *yadeckūdre yadarye yadenaścakṛmā vayaṃ yadekasyā dhi dharmaṇi tasyāvayajanamasi. VS*, XX. 17 (on the occasion of the *sautrāmaṇi* sacrifice); *TS*, I. 8. 3. 1; *KS*, XXXVIII. 5; cf. *Śat. Br.*, XII. 9.2.3.
9. *VS*, XX. 9.
10. *aryaḥ svāmivaiśyayoḥ. Pā.*, III. 1. 103.
11. Comm. to *VS*, XX. 17. The *VI* takes it in the sense of *ārya*.

varṇas, a situation entirely different from the one in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[1], where the vaiśya appears as one to be oppressed, and the śūdra as one to be beaten at the pleasure of the king.

In the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, which was supposed to confer universal sovereignty upon its performer, the śūdras appear as the armed guards of the horse which is sent out on an expedition of world-wide conquest.[2]

That the śūdra could use weapons can also be inferred from an early passage, which states that with the king as helper they slay a king, with the vaiśya a vaiśya, and with the śūdra a śūdra.[3] The traditional account in the *Mahābhārata* refers to a king called Dambhodbhava who used every day to challenge armed soldiers of the kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra classes to prove themselves his equal in fighting.[4] While enumerating different leaders and peoples participating in battle, the epic refers to the case of all the four varṇas taking part and thereby gaining righteousness, heaven and glory.[5] Thus the fact that śūdras also acted as soldiers again betrays the influence of the old tribal polity, in which every member could take up arms.

It is to be further noted that the *āyogava*, who is defined by the commentator as a son of a vaiśya woman by a śūdra, is to act as a vigilant dog in the horse sacrifice.[6] Perhaps this refers to the practice of enlisting the aboriginals as watchmen. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* furnishes the unique case of an *āyogava* king Marutta Āvikṣita performing the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, in which the Maruts act as his body-guards, Agni as his chamberlain, and

1. VII. 29. See *infra*, pp. 59-60.

2. *Śataṃ śūdrā varūthinaḥ. Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XX. 5. 13; cf *Kā. Śr. S.*, XX 50. It seems that moved by later bias the *Satyāṣāḍha Śr. S.*, which is a popular version of the *Āp. Śr. S.*, leaves out the *Śūdra varūthinaḥ. Satyā. Śr. S.*, XIV. 1. 46.

3. *tasmād rājñā rājānam aśabhuvā ghnanti vaiśyena vaiśyaṃ śūdreṇa śūdram. TS*, VI. 4. 8.

4. *asti kaścidviśiṣṭo vā madvidho vā bhavedyudhi; śūdro vaiśyaḥ kṣatriyo vā brāhmaṇo vāpi śastrabhṛt. Mbh.*, V. 94.7.

5. *teṣāmantakaraṃ yuddhaṃ dehapāmapraṇāśanam; śūdravaiśyakṣatraviprāṇaṃ dharmyaṃ svargyaṃ yaśaskaram. Mbh.*, VIII. 32. 18. The Cr. Edn. reads *vīrāṇām* in place of *viprāṇām*, but the latter occurs in *Ms* T1. 3G and seems to be more suitable.

6. *Kā. Śr. S.*, XX. 37.

the All-Gods (Viśvedevas) as his courtiers (sabhāsadas).[1] This does not seem to be a case of a śūdra king but probably is an example of a non-brāhmaṇical ruler being assimilated to the brāhmaṇical polity. The definition of *āyogava* does not appear until the Dharmasūtras, and we cannot be sure that Marutta Āviksita was a low caste king.

It was provided in the *aśvamedha* sacrifice that the house of the *rathakāra* should serve as the resting place for the horse and its guardians.[2] This shows that the *rathakāra* continued to hold his political position in the later ritual of the *aśvamedha* as well.

The *aśvamedha* sacrifice was performed with the object of conquering all the four varṇas, which shows that the ruler felt the necessity of securing the allegiance of all sections of society.[3] The same impression is acquired from another passage, in which, on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifice, the priest makes the king successful in gaining splendour, strength, offspring and firm footing, which qualities are respectively associated with the brāhmaṇa, the kṣatriya, the vaiśya and the śūdra.[4] A passage of similar import is to be found in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*.[5] According to it the rājanya has to repeat the kindling verses thrice, because in addition to the allegiance of the warrior, he has to secure the obedience of three other classes of people, namely, the brāhmaṇa, the vaiśya and the śūdra. All this shows that the obedience of the śūdra was not taken for granted as in some later sources. That it was found essential for the king to win his support also is evident from a passage of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*.[6] It informs us that the Pāñcāla prince Darbha Śātānīki was honoured among the brāhmaṇas, the kṣatriyas, the vaiśyas and the śūdras successively though the use of the *gāyatri*, the *triṣṭubh*, the *jāgatī* and the *anuṣṭubh* metres.[6]

1. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 5. 4. 6.

2. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 4. 2. 17; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XX. 5. 18; *Kā. Śr. S.*, XX. 55; *Satyā Śr. S.*, XIII. 1. 47.

3. *Jai. Br.*, II. 266-267.

4. *Ait Br.*, VIII. 4.

5. *TS*, III. 5. 10. No parallel in other collections of the *Yajus*.

6. *Jai. Br.*, II. 102. The same idea is conveyed by the *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XIV. 33. 18-19 in a slightly different form.

A remarkable passage occuring in all the collections of the *Yajus* contains a prayer to Agni to confer brilliance on 'our' priests, warriors, vaiśyas and śūdras.[1] The context, in which this passage occurs in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, deals with formulas for the performance of the *vasordhārā*, a sort of consecration service of Agni as king. On this occasion the officiating priest (*adhvaryu*) recites formulas meant to bestow all temporal and spiritual blessings on the sacrificer. It is not clear, but may not be improbable, that the ritual is prescribed for the king, who prays to Agni to place lustre in all the varṇas of his subjects including the śūdras.

There was no uniformity in the nature and extent of the śūdra's participation in what may be described as rituals of a political character. In some cases the minutiae of ceremonies varied according to varṇa, and naturally the śūdra was given the lowest place ; in other cases all the varṇas, including the śūdra, participated in the ceremony in the same manner, and could expect similar blessings. At any rate, compared to rules in the Dharmaśāstras, it is worth notice that in the later Vedic period the śūdras could have some share in political power along with the members of the three higher varṇas.

But there is also the other side of the picture. Already during this period a clear tendency had begun to exclude the śūdra from participating in the communal life. Thus the śūdra could not take part in the sprinkling ceremony on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifices, unlike the members of the three higher varṇas.[2] It has been contended by Jayaswal that the *janya* or the *janya-mitra*, who appears in the texts as the fourth person to sprinkle water on the king, is a śūdra in the sense

1. *rucaṃ viśyeṣu śūdreṣu mayi dhehi rucā rucam. TS*, V. 7.6. 4; *VS*, XVIII. 48 ; *KS*, XL. 13 ; *MS*, III. 4.8 ; *TS*, *V.* 7.6. The *Śat. Br.*, IX. 4.2.14 has "*rucaṃ no dhehi brāhmaṇeṣvi' ti*". J. Eggeling thinks that the other three varṇas are understood, and, therefore, in translating the passage notes them in the brackets (*SBE*, xliii, 238). But the text probably furnishes a typical example of brāhmaṇical juggling with the old ritual in the interests of their priestly pretensions.

1. *Śat. Br.*, V. 3.5.11-14 ; *Tai. Br.*, I. 7.8.7; *Vārāha Śr. S.*, III. 3.2.48.

of a man of hostile tribe.[1] Such an interpretation seems to be without any authority. Whatever be the correct meaning of this term,[2] it is clear that it has nothing to do with the śūdra at any place in literature. It is also stated that on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifice the three higher varṇas could request the king to grant a place for the worship of gods.[3] Although the exlusion of the śūdra would naturally follow from the theory that he was born without gods, it can be also taken to indicate his declining importance in political life.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* explains certain rites as establishing the control of the ksatra (ruling chiefs) over the viś (community).[4] The śūdra is left out, presumably because the king's control over him is taken for granted. Another passage, which speaks of the brahma and the kṣatra being established among the viś[5] but leaves out the śūdra, conveys a similar idea.

The śūdra was not admitted to the *vājapeya* (drink of strength) sacrifice, which was supposed to increase the strength of the king. According to one text it was open to the brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya and vaiśya,[6] but in other texts even the vaiśya came to be excluded.[7]

There is an indication of the lack of civic status of the śūdra in a minor ceremony described in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. In explaining a rite of new and full-moon day ceremonies (*darśapūrṇamāsa*) it is argued that the śūdras who are in front of their masters seek their favour, and that those who are not capable of making contradictions are to be treated in the same manner as the śūdras.[8] This would suggest that the śūdras were

1. *Hindu Polity*, ii, 25. What Jayaswal further says implies that in later times the śūdra always appears as a participant in the *abhiṣecana* ceremony, but there is nothing to prove this until we come to the coronation rites of the *Agni Purāṇa* (ch. 218. 18-20), a work of early mediaeval period.

2. For various interpretations see Ghoshal, *Hist. & Essays*, pp. 265-66 and S. V. Venkateswara, *op. cit*, pt. I, 11.

3. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 20.

4. *Śat Br.*, I. 3. 4. 15; II. 5. 2. 6; II. 5. 2. 27; cf. XII. 7. 3. 15.

5. *Ibid*, XI. 2. 7. 16.

6. *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XVI. 17.4 quoted in *VI*, ii, 256.

7. *Vārāha Śr. S.*, III. 1.1.1; Ghoshal, *Hist. & Essays*, p. 283. The vaiśya was, however, associated with some of the minor ceremonies of the *vājapeya* sacrifice along with the kṣatriya (*Kā Śr. S.*, XIV.75).

8. *Tai. Br.*, III. 3.11.2. with Bhaṭṭabhāskara's comm.

not expected to speak against their master, and were thought to be completely servile.

An important development in later Vedic polity is the tendency to claim a special position for the brāhmaṇa and the ksatriya, distinguishing them from the vaiśya and the śūdra. Ghoshal cites a number of examples to show the importance of the brahma and the ksatra as two dominant forces in society, their mutual antagonism and their close political alliance.[1] Prayers for the protection of the two upper classes are to be found in the Saṃhitās[2] as well as in the Brāhmaṇas.[3] If such references are closely analysed, they seem to yield two results. Firstly, most of them occur in later literature, especially in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Secondly, while the earlier references generally point to the combination between the two upper varṇas, the later do it to the specific exclusion of the vaiśya and the śūdra. Thus the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly states that the brāhmaṇa and the kṣatriya enclose the vaiśya and the śūdra.[4] The same text also avers that those who are neither kṣatriya nor purohita (priest) are incomplete.[5] Attention has been already drawn to the exclusion of the vaiśya and the śūdra from the game of dice in the later version of this *rājasūya* rite.[6] In connection with the same coronation sacrifice the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* states that the brāhmaṇa precedes the kṣatra but the vaiśyas and the śūdras follow him.[7] Therefore it would appear that the tendency to equate the vaiśya with the śūdra and exclude them from public life is implicit in earlier texts, but becomes explicit and pronounced in later literature.

This review of the role of the śūdra in the public life of the later Vedic period may be closed with an examination of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* passage,[8] which has been interpreted as indicat-

1. *Hin. P. L.*, i, 73-80.
2. *TS*, XVIII. 38-44 ; *Kāṇva S.*, XX. 2.
3. *Śat. Br.*, III. 5.2.11 ; III. 6.1.17-18 ; IX. 4.1.7-8.
4. *Ibid.*, VI. 4.4.12-13.
5. *Ibid.*, VI. 6.3.12-13.
6. *Supra*, p. 52.
7. *viśaṃ caivāsmai tacchaudraṃ ca varṇaṃ anuvartmānau kurvanti. Ait. Br.*, VIII. 4.
8. VII. 29.

ing an absolutely servile position of the śūdra in the Vedic polity. Such a view is not justified by a close scrutiny of the context and meaning of the crucial passage. It is said that a king named Viśvantara Sauṣadmana performed a sacrifice without the priestly clan of the Śyāparṇas, who were removed from the altar. Their case was taken up by their learned leader Rāma Mārgaveya, who protested against the dismissal of the priests, on the ground that he possessed the knowledge of the food to be taken by the king in lieu of soma on the occasion of the *rājasūya* sacrifice.[1] The passage in question describes in his words the possible results of the various kinds of food to be taken by the king, and in doing so indicates the kind of relation which subsists between the ruling varṇa of the warrior and the three other varṇas. It is said that if the king takes soma, the food of the brāhmaṇa, his progeny will be a brāhmaṇa with all his characteristics. He will be an acceptor of gifts, a drinker of soma, a seeker of livelihood and one to be removed at will (*yathākāmaprayāpyaḥ*)[2]. If the king takes curd, the food of the vaiśya, his progeny will be a vaiśya, and will have all the vaiśya's characteristics. He will be tributary to another, eaten by another, and oppressed at will. But we are more concerned with the epithets which describe the position of the śūdra. It is stated that if the king takes water, the food of the śūdra, he will favour the śūdras and his progeny will have all their characteristics.[3] He will be (i) *anyasya presyaḥ*, (ii) *kāmotthāpyaḥ* and (iii) *yathākāmavadhyaḥ*. Keith correctly renders the first epithet as 'the servant of another', but the same cannot be said of his translation of the other two epithets. The second epithet *kāmotthāpyaḥ* is rendered by him as one 'to be removed at will'[4] and by Haug as one 'to be expelled'[5] at the pleasure of the master. On this basis it is said that the śūdra was a tenant-at-will who

1. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 27-8.

2. Muir, Haug and Weber take the word as active in sense, 'moving at will'. But the verb is clearly used in the passive causative sense (*VI*, ii, 255), which Sāyana recognises.

3. *'atha yadi apaḥ, śūdrānāṁ sa bhaksaḥ; śūdrāvisiena bhakṣena jmi i; yasi ṛ śūdrakalpa ie prajāyāmājanisyate. Ait. Br.*, VIII. 29.

4. *HOS*, xxv, 315.

5. *Tr. of Ait. Br.*, p. 485.

could be thown out of his holding at any time.[1] But Sāyaṇa's comment to this term states that the śūdra could be made to work at any time of the day or night whenever the master desired.[2] His interpretation seems to be quite feasible because the plain meaning of the *utthāpana* is the act of causing to get up to rise. In early Sanskrit the sense of expulsion is conveyed by other words such as *nirvāsana*[3] or *niṣkāsana*. The third epithet *yathākāmavadhyaḥ* has been rendered by Keith as 'to be slain at will.'[4] but Sāyaṇa interprets the phrase as meaning that the śūdra could be beaten by the angry master if he went against his will[5]. Sāyaṇa's interpretation is supported by the *Nirukta*, in which, as against three places where *vadha* means to to kill,[6] at five places it means to hurt or wound.[7] Haug is, therefore, right when he renders the third epithet as 'to be beaten at pleasure'.[8]

The ready and uncritical acceptance of the false view that according to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* the śūdra could be slain at the pleasure of the master[9] led to the natural corollary that in the Vedic period he had no wergeld, which he came to have in the period of the Dharmasūtras, when the relation of simple slavery was being abolished.[10] It is evident that such a view rests on a dubious interpretation of the term *yathākāmavadhyaḥ*. Moreover, although the wergeld (called *vaira* or *vairadeya*) was probably fixed at a hundred cows,[11] there is neither any reference to the variation of this amount according to the varṇa nor to the denial of this right to any varṇa. There seems also to have been provision of penance for the expiation of the sin of manslaughter (*vairahatyā*) through sacrifice[12], but this is also kept free from

1. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, i, 158.
2. *madhyarātrādau yadākasmādāciddina icchā bhavati tadānīm ayam utthāpyate.*
3. *Pā.*, II. 4.10.
4. *HOS.* XXV, 315.
5. *vadhyaḥ=kupitena svāminā tāḍyo bhavati icchāmanatikramya.*
6. III, 11 ; V. 16 and X. 11.
7. III. 9 ; IX. 15, 16, 18 ; X. 29.
8. *Tr. of the Ait. Br.*, p. 485.
9. *VI*, ii, 256.
10. Keith, *CHI*, i, 128-9 ; Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 166; cf. Ghoshal, *Hin. P. L.*, i, 167.
11. *VI*, ii, 331.
12. *Tai. Br.*, I. 5.9.5-6 ; cf. III. 4.1.7.

considerations of varṇa. Therefore it would appear that in later Vedic society varṇa distinctions were not so sharp and wide as to degenerate into the acute civic discriminations of the Dharma-sūtras, in which the śūdra was entitled to the lowest wergeld of ten cows.

Reverting to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* passage, the meanings which have been suggested for the two epithets applied to the śūdra seem to be plausible. In the whole of Vedic literature there is no parallel passage, which describes the śūdra as one to be expelled and slain at the will of the master.

Whether the alternative meanings suggested above represent the true state of affairs is difficult to determine. This is because the Book VII of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, in which the passage in question occurs, is a later part.[1] It would not be surprising if some of the epithets here applied to the various varṇas were used by a discarded priest to ingratiate himself into the favour of his patron king. It is not without significance that even a brāhmaṇa is described as one to be removed at will. In such a case the position of other varṇas can be well imagined.

All these considerations, however, in no way disprove the low status of the śūdra in the later Vedic polity. Our object is to define it as precisely as we can. And it is abundantly clear that while the śūdra was associated with several ceremonies of of the two important sacrifices of political nature, the *aśvamedha* and the *rājasūya*, there had already begun, possibly towards the end of the Vedic period, a definite tendency to exclude him from rituals connected with political life. In many cases the vaiśya was also condemned to the position of the śūdra and deprived of his old rights.

Ritual literature can be also made to yield some information on the social conditions of the śūdra. A passage of the *Yajus* collections states that the vaiśyas and the śūdras were created together.[2] This runs counter to the Puruṣasūkta version, in which the vaiśya precedes the śūdra in the order of creation,

1. Keith, *HOS*, XXV, 29 ; cf. *VI*, ii, 256.

2. *VS*, XIV. 30 ; *MS*, II. 6.6; *KS*, XVII. 5 ; *Kaṭ. S.*, XXVI. 24 ; *TS*, IV. 3.10.2.

with the result that the latter is assigned the lowest place in society. But the tendency to put the vaiśya and the śūdra in the same social category is noticeable in some rites, which show that a vaiśya can be the husband of a śūdra woman and *vice versa*.[1] It is ironically stated that the *arya* husband of a śūdra woman does not seek prosperity, the idea being that such a marriage condemns him to a life of prolonged penury.[2] The commentators take the term *arya* (with short initial vowel) in the sense of vaiśya[3], which provides evidence of marriage between the vaiśya and the śūdra woman ; but the authors of the *Vedic Index* regard these references as instances of illicit union between the ārya and the śūdra.[4] In most cases the reading is *arya*, and therefore the interpretation of the commentators seems to be right. The reading *arya* is also accepted by J. Eggeling in his translation of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[5] where he rightly renders it as vaiśya. But it is not beyond all possibility that the texts may have been tampered with to suit new situations, when marriage between the members of the higher varnas and the śūdra was looked upon with disfavour On the basis of such an assumption it is possible to think of free marital relations between the Āryan and the Śūdra tribes or the people who came to be included in the śūdra varṇa. Later such relations came to be confined to the two lower varṇas.

In the Brāhmaṇas priests and nobles seem to have been free to intermarry with the lower classes, including the śūdra, as the cases of Vatsa and Kavaṣa indicate.[6] Vatsa was called a *śūdrā-putra* by his brother Medhātithi, which shows that this was probably not used as a term of abuse.[7] It is said that Vatsa proved his brāhmaṇahood by walking through the fire unscathed and thus wiped out this reproach. This case shows that the so-

1. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 2.9.8 ; *Tai. Br.*, III. 9.7.3; *VS*, XXIII. 30-31.
2. *Śūdrā yadaryajārā na poṣāya dhanāyati. VS*, XXIII. 30; *MS*, III. 13.1. *TS*, VII.4.19 13 ; *KS* (Aśvamedha), V.4.8 ; *Śāṅkh. Ś. S.*, XVI.4.4-6.
3. Comms. of Mahīdhara and Uvaṭa to *VS*, XXIII. 30.
4. *VI*, ii, 391.
5. *SBE*, xliv, 326.
6. Keith, *CHI*, i, 126.
7. *Pañc. Br.*, XIV. 6.6.

cial rank of a person was not determined by his birth but by his worth.[1] The case of Kavaṣa Ailūṣa being born of a dāsī seems to be doubtful. The epithet *dāsyāḥ putraḥ* applied to him is regarded by Sāyaṇa as a term of abuse.[2] The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*[3] provides an instance of the legal marriage of the slave girl Uśij, the mother of ṛṣi Dīrghatamas, if we may adopt her description given in the *Bṛhaddevatā*.[4] The Purāṇic traditions inform us that Kakṣīvat, a *brahmavādin*, was the son of Dīrghatamas by a śūdra maid-servant of King Bali,[5] and in the epic he is mentioned as being of śūdra birth (*śūdra-yoni*).[6] It has been pointed out that Mahīdāsa, the author of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, was a śūdra.[7] There is nothing to support this view unless his surname *Aitareya* be interpreted as his being the son of *Itarā*[8], which means vile, low or rejected, but this seems to be too far-fetched. In a late Brāhmaṇa Sudakṣiṇa Kṣaimi, a seer and priest, is addressed as a śūdra,[9] but there are no particulars about his parentage, except that he was a descendant of Kṣema, and possibly in his case this epithet is used as a term of abuse. About a dozen ṛṣis, whose mothers belonged to what may be regarded as the one or the other section of the śūdra varṇa, are enumerated in the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*.[10] With minor modifications the list recurs in several other Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata*.[11] It informs us that Vyāsa was born of a fisherwoman, Parāśara of a śvapāka woman, Kapiñjalāda of a caṇḍāla woman, Vasiṣṭha of a prostitute (*gaṇikā*), and the best of sages (*muniśreṣṭha*) Madanapāla was the child of a boatwoman. As a justification for this kind of list, it is said at the end that the origins of the ṛṣis, rivers, pious people, great souls and of the bad character of women cannot be discovered.[12] Nothing definite

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 19 with Sāyaṇa's comm.
3. *Pañc. Br.*, XIV. 11.17.
4. *VI*, ii, 259; *Bṛhaddevatā*, IV. 24-25.
5. *Vāyu P.*, ii, 37.67-94.
6. *Ādi Parvan*, 98.25.
7. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 52.
8. According to Sāyaṇa, *VI*, i, 121-122.
9. *Jai. Up. Br.*, II. 2. 5-6.
10. *I*, 42.22-26.
11. *Anuśāsana P.* (Kumb. edn.), 53.13-19.
12. *Anuśāsana Parvan* (Kumb. edn.), 53.38.

can be said about the chronological position of these ṛṣis or of their actual existence, but such a list testifies to the practice of priests and ṛṣis marrying śūdra or slave women during the later Vedic period. It seems that kings and chiefs too married śūdra women. The *pālāgalī*, who was the fourth and the least respected wife of the king, was a śūdra.[1]

The above examples show that marriage between people of higher varṇas and śūdra women was not discountenanced.[2] Probably in the beginning the Vedic Indians and the aborigines married within their respective tribes.[3] Even when tribes disintegrated, and their members were divided among the four varṇas, the old practice may have continued for a time. But already during the later Vedic period varṇa distinctions had become so strong as not to permit marriage between the male members of the lower classes and the females of higher classes. There had begun also the tendency to look upon the śūdra woman as an object of pleasure for men of the higher varṇas. Thus in a comparatively later Brāhmaṇa the *anuṣṭubh* metre is compared to a śūdra harlot fit for being approached.[4]

During this period we also find traces of contempt for the caṇḍāla. It is stated that those who are of good conduct will attain good rebirth as a brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya or a vaiśya ; but those who are of bad conduct will enter the stinking womb of a dog, swine or caṇḍāla.[5] It is to be noted that, unlike the case of the caṇḍāla, birth in the śūdra varṇa is not described as impure (*kapūyām*), though it seems to have been looked upon as undesirable. It further appears that the caṇḍālas, who were an aboriginal tribe,[6] were coming to be regarded as of reprehensible conduct. But in the early texts of this period the caṇḍāla appears as a victim in the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice,[7] which gives no indication of his

1. *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XVI. 4.4.
2. Cf. Ghurye, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
3. *CHI*, i, 129.
4. *Śāṅkh. Br.*, XXVII. 1. This Brāhmaṇa is considered to be of later origin than the *Śatapatha* and *Aitareya* Brāhmaṇas.
5. *Chā. Up.*, VI. 10.7.
6. It seems that Triśaṅku, who is described as dark in complexion, was probably the leader of the Caṇḍāla tribe. *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. 58. 10-11.
7. *VS*, XXX. 21 ; *Tai. Br.*, III. 4.1-17.

being untouchable. The Paulkasa, however, was associated with loathsomeness.[1]

In the social ethics of the period under review certain bad qualities had come to be associated with the śūdra. We find Sunahśepa of the Āṅgiras clan condemning his father Ajīgarta as a śūdra, because he had sold him for three hundred cows as an object of sacrifice to Varuṇa.[2] Though the son was released by the god and the father gave him a hundred cows to blot out his stain, Śunaḥśepa rebuked him in harsh words. As he said, "...thou art still not free from the brutality of a śūdra, for thou hast committed a crime for which no reconciliation exists".[3] This would suggest that, like Ajīgarta, in times of hunger the śūdras were prepared to part with their children. It was thought that for the sake of material gains they could be brutal and callous towards their near and dear ones.

It is interesting to note further that when Śunahśepa was adopted as a son by Viśvāmitra and given the first rank among his hundred sons, with the right of primogeniture, the fifty older sons refused to accept this position. This infuriated the father, who cursed them to have descendants of lower castes, such as those of the Andhras, Puṇḍras, Śabaras, Pulindas, Mutibas, Dasyus and *antas* (outcastes).[4] While this account provides an early example of the priestly ingenuity in the invention of geneologies for non-Āryan peoples in order to assimilate them to the lower ranks of brāhmanical society, it also shows that recalcitrant and disobedient sons were regarded as Dasyus and *antas*. In his commentary to this passage Sāyaṇa also includes caṇḍālas and other low castes, but they are not mentioned in the text.[5]

In one of the supplementary formulae of the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, to be used in connection with various seasonal and domestic sacrifices, a desire is expressed for talking *kalyaṇīvāk* to the member of all the varṇas.[6] It is contended that this refers

1. *VS*, XXX 17; *Tai Br*, III. 4. 1.14
2. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 15-17; *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XV. 24.
3. *nāpāgaḥ śaudrān nyāyād asaṃdheyaṃ trayā kṛtam. Ait. Br.*, VII. 17.
4. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 18
5. *caṇḍālādirūpānnīcajātiviśesān.* Comm. to *Ait. Br.*, VII. 18.
6. *yathemāṃ vācaṃ kalyāṇīmāvadāni janebhyaḥ; brahma rājanyābhyāṃ śūdrāya aryāya ca svāya cāraṇāya ca. VS*, XXVI. 2.

to the equal right of all classes to the study of the Veda.[1] But the term *kalyāṇīvāk* does not stand for the Veda. The commentators are right when they take it in the sense of kind and courteous speech.[2] It would imply that friendly words were to be used in talking to the members of all the varnas. A distinction, however, appears in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, where, in the instructions for the performance of a certain ceremony, modes of address vary according to the varṇas. Thus the terms 'come hither' (*ehi*), 'approach' (*āgahi*), 'hasten hither' (*ādrava*) and 'run hither' (*ādhāva*) are respectively used in calling the preparer of the offerings (*haviṣkṛt*) from the brāhmana, the rājanyabandhu, the vaiśya and the śūdra classes.[3] Such discriminations are frequently noticed in the social intercourse of post-Vedic times.

Of the four stages of life (*āśramas*), which appear at the end of the Vedic period, only the life of the householder is prescribed for the śūdra in later times, but there is no reference to such a distinction during this period. Although the four *āśramas* are mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, there is no reference to their connection with the varṇas.[4] This brings us to the question of the education of the śūdra, for, according to later texts, he cannot be admitted to the stage of studentship (*brahmacarya āśrama*), which begins with the ceremony of the *upanayana*. The earliest mention of the *upanayana* is to be found in the *Atharva Veda*, where the youth is initiated (*upa-nī*) into a new life by the teacher, for he is supposed to be born from his belly.[5] The initiate becomes a *brahmacārin*, but there is nothing to indicate his varṇa. On the basis of Āruṇi's exhortation to his son Śvetaketu that he ought to pass through the *brahmacarya* it has been held that for a long time the *upanayana* was confined only to priestly or literary families, from whom it was extended to the whole brāhmaṇa class and then finally to all the Āryans.[6] This may be true if the *upanayana* be taken as the start-

1. Mookerji, *AIE*, p. 53.
2. Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara's comm. to *VS*, XXVI. 2.
3. *Śat. Br.*, I. 1.4.12.
4. *Chā. Up.*, II. 23 1-2. A recent writer argues that the theory of the four *āśramas* was not pre-Buddhistic. G. C. Pande, *The Origins of Buddhism*, pp. 322-3.
5. *AV*, XI. 5. 3.
6. Atelkar, *Education in Ancient India*, p. 10.

ing point of literate learning, since in ancient societies education was generally in the hands of the priests. The fact that the *brahmacārin* was normally a brāhmaṇa is known from several sources.[1] But this does not seem to be true of the *upanayana* and the *brahmacarya* if they are taken as signifying the beginning of a new life by a person on his formal admission as a full-fledged adult member of the tribe. Such an interpretation can be put on the tradition that gods, men and demons spent their *brahmacarya* period under the guidance of their father Prajāpati, who was their teacher.[2] This connot be taken to mean that literate learning was widespread among the early peoples, but can only suggest that some form of initiation into the life of the community was a universal practice among the Vedic Indians or their ancestors—a fact which is supported by the prevalence of similar practices among primitive peoples. This practice of initiation was also extended to the Vrātyas, who were admitted into Āryan society through the acquisition of *brahmacarya*.[3]

It is significant that a practice of initiation similar to the *upanayana* also prevailed among the early Iranians. Speaking of the practice of the initiation of the male and female Iranians by means of the investiture with a sacred thread at the age of fifteen, which marked their admission into the community of the followers of Ahura Mazda,[4] Geiger says that it was an ancient custom which was modified and developed in later times.[5] That the practice of initiation prevailed among the Spartans is also well known.[6] Hence we may suppose that initiation was practised among the Vedic Indians as well. As such in the beginning the śūdra members of the disintegrated Āryan tribes may have continued to perform the initiation rites of the *upanayana* and the *brahmacarya* in the same manner as they performed several other

1. *TS*, VI. 3. 10.; *Gopatha Br.*, I 2.2 and 4; *Śat. Br.*, XI. 5 4.12.

2. *Br. Up.*, V. 2.1.

3. *AV*, XI 5, XV; *Pañc. Br.* XVII 1.2. Bloomfield thinks that the converted Vrātya is exalted as a type of the perfect *brahmacārin* *The Atharvaveda*, p. 94.

4. *Vendidād*, XVIII, 9 and 54. 9; Spiegel, *Altiranischeskunde*, iii, 700. cf. 548-9.

5. *Civilization of the Eastern Iranians in Ancient Times*, i, 58-9

6. Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, i, 272.

rituals. The Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas do not refer to the śūdra's exclusion from the rite of the *upanayana*.

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* informs us that Jānaśruti, who was instructed in the knowledge of life (*prāṇa*) and air (*vāyu*) by Raikva, was a śūdra.[1] But elsewhere he appears as the chief of a people called Mahāviṣas,[2] who lived in the north-west. He was dubbed a śūdra either because of his association with the people of the śūdra tribe who also lived in the same region, or because of the defamatory use of this term[3] for those who lay outside the pale of brāhmanical society.

Jānaśruti may not have been a śūdra, but there are other indications to show that the śūdra was not completely debarred from acquiring certain kinds of knowledge. Thus it is stated in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* that the vaiśya was born of the *Ṛg Veda*, the kṣatriya of the *Yajur Veda*, and the brāhmaṇa of the *Sāma Veda*.[4] This obviously implies that the *Atharva Veda* was meant for the śūdra—a provision which is later on vaguely repeated in the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*. It means that the śūdra was excluded from the acquisition of the orthodox Vedic knowledge but not of other forms of knowledge. This impression is also acquired from several passages of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. They inform us that the priest could instruct snake-charmers, usurers, fishermen, bird-catchers, Selagas, Niṣādas, Asuras and Gandharvas, many of whom seem to have belonged to the śūdra varṇa.[5] The subjects taught are the *Itihāsa*, the *Atharva Veda*, the art of snake-charming (*sarpavidyā*) and demonology (*devajana-vidyā*).[6] The list of students and subjects suggests that during the early period the priests did not keep themselves aloof from the practice of arts and crafts, which came to be included within the scope of activities assigned to the śūdra varṇa. But it is not clear

1. *Chā. Up.*, IV. 1.1-8, 3.1-1.

2. *Jai. Br.*, III. 7.3.2 Also called *Nagari Jānaśruteyaḥ* in *Jai. Up. Br.*, III. 7.3.2. Aupavi Jānasruteya performed the *vājapeya* ceremony (*Śat. Br.* V. 1. 1. 5. and 7.

3. Winternitz, *HIL*, i, 229, fn. 3.

4. *Tai. Br.*, III. 12.9.2.

5. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 4.3.7-13.

6. *Ibid.*, cf. *Chā. Up.*, VII. 1. 1.

whether such instruction was accompanied by the imparting of literate learning to the śūdras.

Towards the end of Vedic period there set in the tendency to exclude the śūdra from the *upanayana* and consequently from education. Such an idea is possibly conveyed by a passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where a famous student claims to have been the glory of the brāhmaṇa, the rājan, and the vaiśya.[1] But at another place the learner wishes to be popular with every section of the people including the śūdra.[2] The first clear exclusion of the śūdra is found in a late Śrautasūtra, which lays down seasons for the *upanayana* of the three higher varṇas.[3] It clearly states that the *upanayana*, the study of the Veda and the establishment of fire can bear fruit only in the case of those who are not śūdras and do not indulge in wicked activities.[4] Another text provides that the initiated student (*upanīta*) should not talk to a śūdra.[5] It is further prescribed that the śūdra should wash the feet of the student who has completed his course (*snātaka*) in a ceremony known as the offering of honey (*madhuparka*)[6]. It is difficult to say whether the above references from the two Śrautasūtras indicate conditions in the later Vedic period. They may be assigned to the very end of that period, and perhaps even to post-Vedic times, for one of the earliest Gṛhyasūtras, contemporaneous with the early Śrautasūtras, makes it clear that the *rathakāra* was entitled to the *upanayana*.[7]

It seems, then, that in the beginning the *upanayana* was the affair of the whole tribe ; but as the tribe disintegrated into classes, it became a prerogative, a honorofic distinction to be attained by means of wealth and high social position, which gave the initiated access to more or less exclusive, often secret societies.[8] Just as in Iran it was denied to the Hūiti class,[9] so also in India

1. *Chā. Up.*, VIII. 14.1.
2. *Satyā Śr. S.*, XIX .3.26.
3. *Ibid.*, XIX. 1.4 ; XXVI. 1.20.
4. *Ibid.*, XXVI. 1 6.
5. *Drāhā. Śr. S.*, VII. 3.14.
6. *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XIX. 4.13.
7. *Bau. Gr. S.*, II. 5.6.
8. Gheld, *Ethnology of the Mahābhārata*, pp. 241-2.
9. Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 118.

it was denied to the śūdra varṇa. Following Senart's view that clan exogamy and tribe endogamy later developed into the features of the caste system, it may well be argued that tribal initiation was transformed into the *upanayana* of the three higher varnas, with the result that it helped to bring about the social degradation of the śūdra.

Although the loss of the *upanayana* led to the denial of education to the śūdra, perhaps it did not matter much in the period which we consider. We are still in doubt as to the precise nature of education during the later Vedic period, and there is no direct proof that literacy prevailed at that stage.[1] It is likely that even the kṣatriya and the vaiśya "performed their duties towards the Veda in a very perfunctory way, if at all".[2] A later text shows that ordinarily the student made only a token performance of his Vedic studies,[3] and education may have been primarily the concern of the brāhmaṇa. But the *upanayana* indicated something more than a right to education. It came to signify the higher social status of those who were entitled to this ritual.

The śūdra was not admitted to the *upanayana*, on the ground that it was a Vedic ritual. But the religious life of Vedic times shows that he was not always excluded from Vedic rituals. Many texts provide for the establishment of fire for sacrifice by the *rathakāra*,[4] who could perform it in the rainy season.[5] He occupies the fourth place in the list after the brāhmaṇa, the kṣatriya and the vaiśya. In the *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* the place of the *rathakāra* is taken by the *upakruṣṭa*. This term literally means a person scolded at or chid, but, according to

1. In the recent excavations at Hastināpura several needle-like pointed tools have been discovered in the phase of occupation ascribed to 1100-800 B. C., but it is not certain that they were used for writing. *AI*, No. 10-11, 14.

2. Hopkins quoted in Mookerji, *AIE*, pp. 339-40.

3. *Śāṅkh. Gr. S.*, II. 7.21-25.

4. *Tai. Br.*, I. 1.4.8 ; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), V. 11. 7 ; *Kā. Śr. S.*, I. 9 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, III. 1 ; *Vārāha Śr. S.*, I. 1.1.4.

5. *Āp. Śr. S.* (Caland's and Garbe's edn.), V. 3.19 ; *Kā. Śr. S.*, IV. 179-81 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, III. 2 ; *Vārāha Śr. S.*, I. 4.1.1 ; *Vaikhā. Śr. S.*, I.1 ; cf. *Āśva. Śr. S.*, II. 1.13.

the commentator, it stands for a carpenter (*takṣaka*).[1] This would suggest that although the carpenters were reviled, they continued to be admitted to the sacrifice. Another such person, who enjoyed the right to the Vedic sacrifice, was the chief of the Niṣādas (*niṣāda-sthapati*).[2] But his sacrifice was meant for the pacification of animals through the worship of Rudra-Paśupati.[3] In a similar reference at another place only the Niṣāda is mentioned.[4] But the commentator says that it refers to the Niṣāda chief (*sthapati*), and adds that in the *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra* he is a *traivarṇika* (of the first three varṇas).[5] In the *Mahābhārata* also the head of the Niṣādas (*niṣādādhipati*) is said to have performed sacrifices.[6] A passage of the *Ṛg Veda* refers to the participation of 'five peoples' (*pañcajanāḥ*) in the sacrifice.[7] The *Nirukta* explains the term *pañcajanāḥ* as meaning the four varṇas and the *Niṣādas*.[8] This cannot be taken as applying to the period of the *Ṛg Veda*, as is sometimes done.[9] Neither does the word *niṣāda* occur in the *Ṛg Veda* nor is the existence of the four varṇas a well-established fact there. Obviously the term *pañcajanāḥ* refers to the five *Ṛg Vedic* tribes, whose members offered sacrifices without any distinction. Yāska's interpretation, however, shows that in his time the śūdras as well as the Niṣādas, who came to be specified in the Dharmasūtras as a mixed caste born of a brāhmaṇa and a śūdra woman, could take part in the sacrifice. Thus the references prove that occasionally the Niṣāda people and generally the Niṣāda chief enjoyed the right to the Vedic sacrifice. It was laid down that in the *viśvajit* sacrifice the sacrificer would have to stay for three nights with the Niṣāda

1. *takṣakakarmopajīvyupakruṣṭa ityucyate. Āśva.Śr.S.*, II. 1.13. with the comm. of Nārāyaṇa.

2. *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), IX. 14.12 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XV. 4. 20 ; *Vārāha. Śr. S.*, I. 1.1.5 ; cf. *Kā. Śr. S.*, I. 12.

3. *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's end.), IX. 14.11 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XV. 4.19 ; *Vārāha Śr. S.*, I. 1.1.5.

4. *Satyā. Śr. S.*, III. 1.

5. Comm. to *Satyā. Śr. S.*, III. 1.

6. *Mbh.*, I. 61.48.

7. *RV*, X. 53.4.

8. *Nir.*, III. 8. Aupamanyava takes the term *nisāda* as *nisāda-sthapati*. Skandasvāmī and Maheśvara on *Nir.*, III. 8.

9. Mookerji, *AIE*, pp. 52-53.

as well as with a vaiśya and rājanya.[1] This shows that the Niṣāda people were indirectly associated with this sacrifice.

Of the two categories of people enjoying the right to sacrifice, it is clear that the *rathakāra* was a member of the Āryan community, but the Niṣādas seem to have been a non-Āryan people living in their own villages.[2] There are several references to the black colour of the Niṣāda people in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[3] Probably as a step in their brāhmaṇization, the Niṣādas as a tribe were allowed to carry on their own sacrifice in the Vedic way, which privilege later came to be confined only to their chief. Thus it is evident that right up to the end of the Vedic period the right of sacrifice was enjoyed by the *rathakāra* and the Niṣādas, who fell under the category of śūdras. What is more important, Yāska's interpretation of the term *pañcajanāḥ* would show that in his opinion the whole śūdra varṇa enjoyed this right.

There is specific mention of the participation of the śūdra in several religious rites. He could take part in the preparation of the offerings (*haviṣ*) for the god along with the members of the three varṇas, although the mode of address employed for him reflects his lowest place in that rite.[4] Similarly along with the members of other varṇas he could drink soma, and had to undergo atonement in case of vomiting.[5] Referring to the case of the *dāsī-putra* Kavaṣa Ailūṣa Hopkins points out that the śūdra's son shares the sacrifice and the śūdra drinks soma in one of the half-brāhmaṇical, half-popular festivals.[6] It is curious to note that a passage from the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* does not permit śūdras and women to drink soma.[7] This is, however,

1. *...niṣādeṣu haiva tā vased ..vaiśyeva ha tā bhrātṛvye tā vased.. rājaṃ haita tā vased. Jai. Br.*, II. 184 ; *Pañc. Br.*, XVI. 6.7 ; *Kauṣitakī Br*, XXV. 15 ; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), XVII. 26.18 ; *Lāṭyā. Śr., S*, VIII. 2.8.

2. There is a reference to the Niṣāda-grāma is the comm. to the *Lāṭyā. Śr. S.*, VIII. 2.8.

3. Quoted in Shafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India*, p. 10.

4. *Śat. Br.*, I. 1.4.11-12 ; *Āp. Śr. S* (Caland's edn.), I. 19.9.

5. *catvaro vai varṇāh. brāhmaṇo rājanyo vaiśyah śūdro na haiteṣāmekaścana bhavati yaḥ somaṃ vamati, sa yat haiteṣāmekaścittsyāttsyāddhaiva prāyaścittih Sat. Br.*, V. 5.4.9.

6. *Ait. Br.*, II. 19 ; Hopkins, *Religions of India* p. 477.

7. *KS*, XI. 10.

not found in other collections of the *Yajus*, and hence seems to be either an interpolation or at best the view of the Kāṭhaka school.

The śūdra also participated in two other minor rites. He could take part in the rite of offering prepared food (*odana-sava*) like the members of the other three varṇas, the condition being that food varied according to the varṇa.[1] Similarly the rite of offering first fruits could be performed by the members of all the varnas.[2]

The śūdra's part in the solstice ritual known as the *mahā-vrata* furnishes important evidence of his participation in the religious life of the period. According to it the śūdra stays outside the *vedi* and the ārya stays inside. They fight over the possession of hide, and the victory goes to the ārya.[3] In some texts the śūdra varṇa and the ārya varṇa are distinctly mentioned.[4] Where the reading is *arya*, it means vaiśya ;[5] on the other hand where it is *ārya* it means a member of the first three varṇas. In some texts the place of the ārya is taken by the brāhmaṇa,[6] who appears as the opponent of the śūdra, a feature which becomes common in post-Vedic times. Another Vedic passage, in which the two come in for special notice, states that neither a brāhmaṇa nor a śūdra can be offered as sacrifice to Prajāpati.[7] The passage, which occurs in the later portion of the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, probably indicates that, while the brāhmaṇa is too high for the purpose, the śūdra is too low.

As to the significance of the *mahāvrata* ceremony, it possibly preserves the memory of fights for cattle both among the Āryans themselves and between Āryans and non-Āryans, who were

1. *ājyamanthaṃ brāhmaṇaḥ payomanthaṃ rājanyo dadhimanthaṃ vaiśya udmanthaṃ śūdraḥ. Śatyā. Śr. S.*, XXIII. 4.17. The passage suggests the comparative poverty of the śūdras.

2. *Āśva. Śr. S.*, II. 9.7.

3. *śūdrāryaur carmmani parimaṇḍale vyāyacchete. jayatyāryaḥ. Kā. Śr. S.*, XIII. 40-41 ; *Pañc. Br.*, V. 5.14 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XVI. 6.28.

4. *Jai. Br.*, II. 404-5. The term *ārya varṇa* occurs in *KS.*, XXXIV. 5, but there is no mention of śūdra varṇa.

5. *Śaṅkhā. Śr. S.*, XVII. 6. 1-2 ; *Lāṭyā. Śr. S.*, IV. 3.9.5-6.

6. *Tai. Br.*, I. 2.6.7.

7. *aśūdrā abrāhmāṇāste prājāpatyāḥ. VS*, XXX. 22.

reduced to the position of śūdras. The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra* states that this antiquated and obsolete custom ought not to be performed.[1] This would show that the śūdra could enter into sacral relations with the members of the higher varṇas in an old ritual such as the *mahāvrata*, but ceased to do so when such rituals went out of vogue.

The śūdra also had his place in the funeral rituals of the later Vedic period. It was laid down that the śūdra could have his sepulchral mound, though it would be only as high as the knee, the height varying according to the varṇa.[2]

The śūdras are described as having and worshipping gods like any other class of the community. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* the śūdra is called Pūṣan, which suggests that this god is assigned to him.[3] Similarly in the mythology of the *Mahābhārata* the twin Aśvins, physicians of the gods, are regarded as śūdras.[4] It is significant that in the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony the Aśvins are associated with the *saṃgrahītṛ*[5] and Pūṣan with the *bhāgadugha*.[6] But in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* Pūsan, along with the Viśvedevas (All-Gods) and the Maruts (peasant-gods), is associated with the vaiśyas.[7] In a way the Viśvedevas are indirectly assigned to the śudras as well. The *anuṣṭubh*, which is a later and popular metre ascribed to the śūdra,[8] is also assigned to the Viśvedevas.[9] It is stated that through the recitation of this metre Prajāpati[10] and Indra were honoured among the Viśvedevas, and the Pañcāla prince Darbha Śātānīki among the śūdras.[11] Therefore in this case the Viśvedevas of divine society correspond to the śūdras of human society.

1. XVII. 6.1-2.
2. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 8.3.11. It is interesting to note that the tomb of the kṣatriya is to be the greatest in height and that of the brāhmana to be the next.
3. *Br. Up.*, I. 4.11-13.
4. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 168.
5. *Śat Br.*, V. 3.1.8.
6. *Ibid.*, V. 3.1.9.
7. *Tai. Br.*, II. 7.2.1 and 2.
8. *TS*, VII. 1.1 4-5 ; *Pañc. Br.*, VI. 1.6-11.
9. *Jai. Br.*, II, 101 ; *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, XV. 10.1-4.
10. Prajāpati is not mentioned in the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*.
11. *Jai. Br.*, III. 101.

Of the gods associated with the śūdras, Pūṣan seems to have been a shepherd god[1] and, as such, probably represents the cattle-rearing and nourishing activities of the Āryan viś. The Aśvins, who are described in the later portion of the *Rg Veda* as sowing the grain with the plough and milking food for man,[2] may be associated with the agricultural activities of the viś. The Viśvedevas are assigned to the viś because of their being great in number. The fact that precisely the same three gods who were associated with the Āryan viś later came to be directly or indirectly ascribed to the śūdra would suggest that even when sections of the viś were reduced to the position of śūdras, they continued to retain their old Vedic gods.

There is also evidence to show that considerable sectors of the lower orders, Āryan and non-Āryan, worshipped Rudra-Paśupati, who seems to have been a pre-Āryan deity. In the *śatarudrīya* litany, accompanying the offerings appropriate to various forms of Rudra, reverence is shown to all sections of society headed by the brāhmana and followed by the rājanya, the sūta and the vaiśya together with the different kinds of artisans and aboriginal peoples. But the first three varṇas are mentioned in only one collection of the *Yajus*.[3] While the śūdra as such is not mentioned in any of them, all the *Yajus* lists speak of reverence being shown to the *rathakāras* (cartwrights), the *kulālas* (potters), *karmāras* (smiths), the Niṣādas, the Puñjiṣṭhas (aboriginal people working as fishermen or catchers of birds), the *śvanis* (dog-feeders or dog-keepers) and the *mṛgayas* (hunters,)[4] who may well be put in the fourth varṇa. Besides, the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* mentions makers of bows and arrows (*dhanukāras* and *iṣukāras*),[5] who may also fall under this category.

These artisans and tribal peoples worshipped Rudra as their patron god.[6] According to Weber the "Rudra book dates from

1. Dutt, *A History of Civ. in Anc. India*, i. 60-61.
2. *yávaṃ vṛ'keṇāśvinā vápantèṣaṃ duhántā mánuṣāya dasrā*..... *RV.* I. 117.21.
3. *MS*, II. 9.5.
4. *VS*, XVI. 27 ; *KS*, XVII. 13 ; *Kap. S.*, XXVIII. 3 ; *MS*, II. 9.5 ; *TS*, IV. 5.4.2 ; *Kāṇva S.*, XVII. 4.
5. *TS*, IV. 5.4.2.
6. *Cf. VI.* ii, 249-50.

the time of these secret feuds on the part of the conquered aborigines as well as of the Vrātyas or unbrāhmaṇised Āryans, after their open resistence had been more or less crushed."[1] He further points out that various mixed castes were not established without vigorous opposition from those thrust down into the lower castes.[2] This would imply, then, that in the process of struggle against the growing privileges of the higher varnas there went on considerable intermingling between the discomfited sections of the Āryan tribes and the masses of the conquered aborigines, with the inevitable result that some Āryans, such as the *rathakāra* and the *karmāra*, rallied under the banner of a non-Āryan god Rudra. It is worth notice that in the *ratnahavīṃṣi* ceremony Rudra is described as the god of the *govikartana*,[3] who is specified by Sāyaṇa as 'of whatever low caste'. It has been shown earlier that Rudra-Paśupati was the god of the Niṣāda chief.[4] Thus it it beyond all doubt that the śūdras also had their gods, some Āryan others non-Āryan. Therefore the brāhmaṇical statement in the stories of creation that the śūdra did not have any gods[5] does not represent the correct position. One creation legend at least implies that Day and Night were the gods of the śūdras[6] Clearly the brāhmaṇical legends show a deliberate attempt to deprive the śūdra of the right to worship and sacrifice, which he formerly shared with his Āryan fellowmen, or enjoyed independently as a member of the aboriginal tribes.

The mass of evidence in favour of the śūdra's participation in the Vedic sacrifice is more than counterbalanced by the evidence against it. It is repeatedly stated that the śūdra has no right to sacrifice[7] on account of his low birth, and that he is incapable of making sacrificial offerings.[8] A rite connceted with the building of the fire altar (*agnicayana*), without which there

1. *Ind. Lit.*, pp. 110-111.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Sat. Br.*, V. 3.1.10.
4. *Supra*, p. 71.
5. *TS*, VIII. 1.1 ; *Pañc. Br.*, VI. 1.6-11.
6. *VS*, XIV. 30 ; *Sat. Br.*, VIII. 4.3.12.
7. *Tai. Br.*, III. 2.3.9 ; *Kāt. Śr. S.*, I. 5 ; cf. *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, I. 1.1-3 ; *Asva. Śr. S.*, I.3.3.
8. *Tai., Br.* III. 2.3.9.

can be no Vedic sacrifice, is explained as removing Agni from the śūdra varna.[1] But the fact that such direct statements about the exclusion of the śūdra from the Vedic sacrifice are not found in the Saṃhitās may suggest their late origin. None the less, even in those texts there are numerous references, which have this implication. The instructions for the ceremony of the establishment of fire for sacrifice speak of only the first three varṇas,[2] whose seasons for this purpose are mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas. Even the *rathakāra* is left out. In this connection it is stated that the fire coincides with the universe, which consists of the brāhmaṇa the ksatriya and the viś.[3] It is also said that the rājanya and the viś are born of sacrifice and hence of the brāhmaṇa.[4] Again the assertion that only members of the first three varṇas are able to sacrifice and hence a śūdra cannot enter the sacrificial ground[5] is in accord with the above statements.

In addition to the śūdra's exclusion from the general Vedic sacrifice, there are instances of his dissociation from certain specific Vedic rituals. For instance, the Soma sacrifice (*soma-yāga*) is prescribed for the brāhmana, the vaiśya and the rājanya.[6] The *agnihotra* (an oblation to Agni) is to be performed by an *āryа*, who according to the commentator, is a member of the three higher varnas.[7] The śūdra is expressly prohibited from milking the cow for the milk required at the *agnihotra*,[8] because he is supposed to be born of untruth.[9] Accordingly the earthen pot for milking (*sthālī*) is to be prepared by an Āryan.[10] But such a prohibition does not occur in the *Vājasaneyi* and the *Taittirīya* collections of the *Yajus* ; it occurs only in the supplementary

1. *Śat. Br.* VI 4.4.9.
2. *MS*, III. 1.5 ; III 2.2. Only the brāhmana and rājanya are mentioned in *TS*, V. 1.4.5 ; *KS*, XIX. 4. and *Kap. S.*, XXX. 2. Even the vaiśya is excluded.
3. *Śat. Br.*, II. 5.2.36.
4. *Ibid.*, III. 2.1.40.
5. *VI*, ii, 390.
6. *Kā. Śr. S.*, VII. 105.
7. *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), VI. 3.7 with the comm, of Rudradatta.
8. *Tai. Br.*, III. 2.3.9.-10 ; *Kap. S.*, XLVII. 2; *MS*, IV. 1.3 ; *Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn), VI 3.11 ; *Baudhā. Śr. S.*, XXIV. 31 ; *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.*, II. 8.3 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, III. 7.
9. *asato vā eṣa saṃbhūto yacchūdrah. Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn), VI. 3.12.
10. *MS*, I. 8.3.

portions of the *Maitrāyaṇi* and *Kapiṣṭhala* collections. The corresponding passage in the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* is without accent, which suggests its later insertion. Furthermore, the *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra*, which is considered as the oldest of its kind,[1] gives the alternative provision that the śūdra can milk the cow.[2] The commentator tries to circumvent this meaning by pointing out that he can do it when allowed.[3] All this would show that the ban on the śūdra's milking of the cow at the *agnihotra* may not belong to the genuine portions of the Saṃhitās. It may be ascribed to the time of the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*.[4]

Harsh provisions, which even forbid bodily contact with and sight of the śūdra on certain ceremonial occasions, began to appear towards the end of the Vedic period. A person consecrated for the sacrifice is asked not to speak to the śūdra,[5] and the same condition is imposed on a person who has been initiated (*upanīta*).[6] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* lays down that at the *pravargya* ceremony (an introductory Soma rite) the performer should shun contact with a woman and a śūdra because they are untruth.[7] Except one such reference in the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*, this is the earliest example of bracketting the woman with the śūdras—a practice which is frequently found in later literature.[8] It is also provided that a woman performing a rite for the sake of a son should not be touched by a vṛṣala, male or female,[9] who in later times is identified with the śūdra and depicted as anti-brāhmaṇical. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* even a carpenter's touch is regarded as imparting ceremonial impurity to the sacri-

1. Garbe, *Āp. Śr. S.*, ii. Preface, p. XII.
2. *duhyād vā. Āp. Śr. S.* (Garbe's edn.), VI. 3. 13.
3. Rudradatta's comm to *Āp. Śr. S.*, VI. 3.13.
4. *Tai. Br.*, III. 2.3.9-10.
5. *Śat. Br.*, III. 1.1.10 ; *na śūdrena saṃbhāṣeran. Drā. Śr. S.*, VIII. 3.14 . *Lāṭyā. Śr. S.*, III. 3. 15-16, applies this condition to the performer of the *sattra* sacrifice. *Satyā. Śr. S.*, X. 2.
6. *Drā. Śr. S.*, VIII. 3.14 ; *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XXIV. 8.16 also adds woman to whom a brahmacārin should not talk after initiation.
7. *Śat. Br.*, XIV. 1.1.31 ; also in *Satyā. Śr. S.*, XXIV. 1.13.
8. *R. S.* Sharma, *JBRS*, xxxvi, 183-191.
9. *Śat. Br.*, XIV. 9.4.12.

ficial vessels.[1] But at another place, if the reading in the *Mādhyandina* recension of that text is correct, the *takṣan* appears as reciting the *mantra* for Āruṇi.[2] It has to be remarked that all such references about avoiding contact with the śūdra occur either in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* or the *Śrautasūtras*, which indicates that the idea of the ceremonial impurity of the śūdra involving prohibition of physical and visual contact with him appeared towards the close of the Vedic period.

A review of the position of the śūdra in the religious life of the later Vedic period shows that, in addition to the *rathakāra* and the *niṣāda*, who could take part in the Vedic sacrifice, the śūdra varṇa as such had its gods and could participate in several Vedic rites. It is true that in most cases the mode of participation was meant to indicate the śūdra's low position in society, but on that account this privilege was not completely denied to him. The process of his exclusion, which is already in evidence in some of the earlier texts, became stronger towards the very close of the Vedic period. It seems that the growth of economic and social differentiation gradually changed the character of the tribal sacrifice, which tended to become individual and involved more and more gifts to the priests. In course of time the sacrifice came to be the prerogative of the higher varṇas, who could afford the means to pay for it. This can be inferred from the commentary of Śaṅkara to a passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,[3] where he says that God created the vaiśyas to acquire wealth, which is the means of performing rites. Similarly in the *Mahābhārata* Yudhiṣṭhira is represented as stating that sacrifices cannot be performed by people who are poor, for they require a large store of diverse kinds of articles. He further says that merit attaching to sacrifices can be acquired only by kings and princes, and not by those who are destitute

1. *aśuddhastakṣā*. *Śat. Br.*, I. 1.3.12. Brough suggests that this may be due to an earlieridea of offence to the wood-land spirits in the desecration of the tree. Banerjea, *Studies in the Brāhmaṇas*, p. 127, fn. 2.

2. *Śat. Br.* II. 3.1.31. In the Kāṇva recension it is Dakṣa.

3. I. 4.12.

of wealth and helpless.[1] This would imply that generally the śūdra, who could ill afford to make gifts on the occasion of the sacrifice, was unable to perform it. In the case of a rich śūdra association with sacrifice was not considered undersirable, for it was laid down that fire could be accepted from his house.[2]

It is argued that "a sense of danger with which the purity of the Brāhmaṇical faith was threatened from the idolatrous practices of the aboriginal subjects" first suggested to the brāhmaṇas "the necessity of raising an insurmountable barrier between the Āryan freeman and the men of the servile class".[3] This seems to be a rather naive explanation. It is obviously based on the assumption that the śūdras were made up only of the conquered peoples, which is incorrect. Even so the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Atharva Veda* and many earlier references in later Vedic literature do not show any indications of protecting the purity of the brāhmaṇical faith by raising strong barriers against the śūdras. Possibly the śūdras who were recruited from the conquered aboriginals were excluded from the Vedic sacrifice because of their different religious practices, but this cannot be regarded as the only cause of such a development. We have already pointed to possible reasons for the śūdra's exclusion.

The position of the śūdra, which emerges from an analysis of the Vedic rituals, does not seem to be consistent. Economically on the one hand, there is mention of his owning cattle and probably functioning as an independent peasant ; on the other hand the śūdras seem to have been domestic servants, agricultural labourers and in some cases slaves. Politically, we hear of śūdra *ratnins*, but there is also mention of the śūdras and the vaiśya being

1. *na te śakyā daridrena yajñāḥ prāptuṃ pitāmaha; bahūpakaraṇā yajñā nānā saṃbhāravistarāḥ. pārthivai rājaputrair vā śakyāḥ prāptuṃ pitāmaha ; nārthanyūnairavagunairekātmabhirsaṃhataiḥ. Mbh* (Kumb.), XIII. 164.2-3 ; (Cal.) XII. 107. 2-3. This passage seems to have been the product of a much later period ,but it may be taken as reflecting conditions in the later Vedic period.

2. *yo brāhmano rājanyo vaiśyaśudro vā'sura iva bahupuṣtasyāttasya gṛhādāhṛtyādadhyāt puṣtikāmasya. Āp. Ś. S.* (Garbe's edn.), V. 14.1. Of course the adjective *bahupuṣṭaḥ* is applied to the brāhmana ,the rājanya and the vaiśya as well but seems to be of special significance in the case of the śūdra, who is described as being removed from the fire.

3. Eggeling, *SBE*, xii, Introd., p. XIII.

enclosed by the brāhmaṇa and the kṣatriya. Socially, it is inaccurate to think that śūdras were saddled with restrictions regarding food and marriage;[1] there is, however, some evidence of contempt for birth in a caṇḍāla family and of the ascription of certain bad qualities to the śūdra. Religiously, the śūdra was permitted to take part in certain rites, and yet excluded from several specific rituals as well as from the Vedic sacrifice in general. In other words, Keith is right when he says that in the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas the position of the śūdra is ambiguous.[2]

The contradiction in the position of the śūdra during the later Vedic period may be partly explained by the chronological position of the references. Generally the non-admission of the śūdra to rituals, which permeated all spheres of life, is to be found almost exclusively in later texts. But we also find rights and disabilities existing side by side. This may be accounted for by the existence of decaying tribal features alongside growing varṇa distinctions. As a member of the Āryan tribes the śūdra retained some of the tribal rights of taking part in various rituals, even when he was thrown into the ranks of the serving class.

A striking feature of the śūdra's position during this period is the special status accorded to the artisan sections of that varṇa, such as the *rathakāra* and the *takṣan*. This was possibly owing to their great value as workers in wood and metal, without whom the Āryans could not expand and flourish. It has been shown earlier that the *takṣan* seems to have been a smith. His high status in Vedic society is in keeping with his honourable position in primitive agricultural communities, in which he serves even as a councillor of kings.[3]

It is not possible to accept the thesis propounded in the *Vedic Index* and accepted by several writers[4] that the śūdra was a serf in the beginning, that his life was insecure and then

1. *IC*, xii, 183.
2. *CHI*, i, 129.
3. R. G. Forbes, *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, p. 79.
4. *VI*, ii, 390 ; Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste*, pp. 101-5 ; Valavalkar, *Hindu Social Institutions*, p. 288.

gradually his old disabilities began to be removed. Such a view does not hold good of those Āryans who were degraded to the position of śūdras. Of course the non-Āryans were subjected to a policy of extermination in course of early wars, but there is nothing to show that at that time those who were conquered were encumbered with disabilities. On the contrary, the process seems to have been just the reverse. While the earlier references point to the participation of the śūdra in the communal life, the later references point to his exclusion, with the result that towards the close of the Vedic period disabilities overwhelmed the old tribal rights. They become so marked and perhaps so oppressive as to evoke protests from the *Upaniṣads*. It is stated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[1] that even the caṇḍālas and paulkasas cease to be as such in the world of the soul, where all distinctions disappear. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[2] states that even a caṇḍāla is entitled to the leavings of the *agnihotra* sacrifice, round which hungry children sit just as they sit round a mother. We do not know how far such protests in favour of the lower order were derived from the old ideal of tribal equality, but the posibility cannot be entirely ruled out. This tendency was carried forward by the reformation movements of post-Vedic times, while the opposite tendency, which sought to impose increasing disabilities on the śūdra varṇa, was continued by the compilers of the Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras.

1. IV. 3.22.
2. V. 24.4.

CHAPTER IV

IMPOSITIONS OF DISABILITIES

(c. 600—c. 300 B. C.)

For the study of the position of the śūdras in post-Vedic times, the brāhmaṇical sources, which mainly comprise the Dharmasūtras (law-books), the Gṛhyasūtras (books dealing with domestic rites) and the grammar of Pāṇini, can be supplemented by the early Buddhist and Jain texts. The chronological position of these sources can be fixed only roughly. In the latest study of the subject made by Kane the principal Dharmasūtras have been assigned to the period 600-300 B. C.[1] The sūtras show a grammatical freedom which is hardly conceivable after the period of the full influence of Pāṇini,[2] whose grammar has been assigned to the middle of the 5th century B.C.[3] The law-book of Gautama, which contains most information relating to the śūdras, is believed to be the oldest of the Dharmasūtras.[4] But its mention of Yavanas as born of śūdra females and Ksatriya males,[5] more examples of the joint notices of the vaiśya and the śūdra[6] as found in the later Dharmaśāstras, the attempt to introduce uniform laws for the whole of of India,[7] the provision of punishment for cow-killing,[8] the enumeration of nearly twenty mixed castes[9] —all these features show that its contents underwent great revision in later times.[10]

1. *Hist. Dh. S.*, ii, pt. I, p. XI. Meyer (*Altin. Rechtsschriften*, p. VII) regards the *Bau.* and the *Ap. Dh. Ss.* as pre-Buddhist, and ascribes the *Vas. Dh. S.* to the fourth century B.C. Cf. Hopkins, *CHI*, i, 249

2. Keith, *CHI*, i, 113.
3. Agarwala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 475.
4. Buhler, *SBE*, ii, p. XLV ; Kane , *Hist. Dh. S.*, i, 13.
5. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, IV. 21. Hopkins thinks that this refers to Bactrian and other Asiatic Greeks. *CHI*, i, 240. fn. 1.
6. *Gaut. Dh S.*, V.41-42, 45.
7. Bühler, *SBE*, ii, p. XLIX.
8. *Gaut. Dh S.*, XXII. 18
9. *Ibid.*, IV. 16-21.
10. Cf. B. K. Ghosh, *IHQ*, iii, 6.7-11.

Therefore all its laws relating to society may not reflect conditions in the pre-Mauryan period.

The land of the Āryans (Āryāvarta), to which the Dharmasūtras were to apply, embraced the region between the Punjāb and Bihār, and between the Himālayas and the hills of Mālwā,[1] but the lawgiver Baudhāyana belonged to the south though the same cannot be said with certainty about Āpastamba, who refers to a peculiar *śrāddha* usage of the northerners (*udīcyas*)[2]. The school of Vasiṣṭha probably flourished in the regions of the north-west.[3]

To the period 600-300 B.C. may be also assigned the principal Gṛhyasūtras,[4] which have been characterised as 'the most reliable reports' on the daily life of the ancient Indians.[5]

Of the Buddhist sources the four collections of the *suttas* (dialogues), i.e., the *Dīgha*, the *Majjhima*, the *Saṃyutta* and the *Aṅguttara*[6] together with the *Vinaya Piṭaka*,[7] may be roughly ascribed to the pre-Mauryan period. It is more difficult to fix the date of the Jātakas,[8] in which the *gāthās* (verses), being the canonical texts, constitute the oldest stratum. But even the stories of the past, which are in the form of commentary in prose, may be put in the pre-Mauryan period ; nevertheless, the present stories occasionally seem to reflect conditions in the Mauryan period, and are clearly later additions.[9] While the scene of the stories of the past lies in the western or central part of India, the scene of the majority of the stories of the present is in Sāvatthi or Rājagaha.[10] Further, the third, fourth and fifth volumes of the Jātakas can be generally considered as parts that have

1. *CHI*. i, 242.
2. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 7.17.17 ; cf Kane, *Hist. Dh. S.* i, 44
3. *CHI*, i, 249-50.
4. Kane, *Hist. Dh. S.*, ii, pt. I. p. XI.
5. Winternitz, *HIL*, i, 274.
6. Law, *HPL*, i, 30-33.
7. *Ibid.*, 15.
8. For early date of the Jātakas see T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*. p. 207.
9. Cf. Law, *HPL*, i, 30 ; Hopkins, *CHI*, i, 260, fn. 1. The most recent discussion of the question is to be found in the article of O. Fis'er *AO*, xxii. 238-9.
10. *AO*, xxii, 238-9.

assumed their present shape in a period posterior to the majority of the simple stories of the first and second volumes.[1]

It has been recently suggested that the Jātakas represent a state of society which provided suitable conditions for trade, perhaps during the Sātavāhana period.[2] But the finds of punch-marked silver and copper coins coupled with a large number of iron objects, assigned to the period of the North Black Polished Ware (*circa* 600-250 B.C.), clearly point to the definite beginnings of urban life[3] nd athe rise of trade and commerce.[4] Besides, Kauṭilya's regulations regarding industry and commerce, if true of Mauryan times, do presuppose some progress in such economic activities in the earlier period. Again, the Jātakas hardly refer to the trade and commerce of southern India, with which the Romans were in active intercourse under the Sātavāhanas. Nor do the Jātakas allude to so many guilds and occupations as we find in the Sātavāhana period.[5] Moreover, since the Buddhist birth stories are represented in the reliefs and sculptures of Sānchī and Bhārhut in the second century B.C., they can be taken back at least two centuries earlier, especially in a country where old religious traditions continued to provide the motif for works of art till mediaeval times. Thus although the gāthās and past stories may be regarded as reflecting the state of affairs existing in the two or three centuries preceding the establishment of the Mauryan empire, for the purpose of our study those parts of the Jātakas which deal with the caṇḍālas may be regarded as later additions because the Jātaka references to these despised people are not corroborated fully by the brāhmaṇical texts of the pre-Mauryan period. We may also note that the long list of mixed castes given by Manu does not find its counterpart in the Jātakas.

1. *Ibid.*, xxii, 249 ; Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
2. D. D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 259-60. cf. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *JAOS*, lxxvii, 223-4.
3. Rude beginnings of urban life, as will appear from recent excavations at Hastināpura and Katra in Mathura, may be traced earlier than 600 B.C.
4. This line of study has to be pursued further ; a comparison between the archaeological remains of the N.B.P. period and the contents of the early Pāli texts will not only help to establish the date of these literary sources on a firm footing but will add to our knowledge and understanding of the material life in pre-Mauryan times.
5. *Infra.*, Ch. VI.

There are greater chronological uncertainties in the case of the Jain sources, which have not been edited and studied as well as the Buddhist texts. It is held that the canonical works were first compiled somewhere towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C.[1] But, dealing as they do with the life of Mahāvīra, they may be utilised for the pre-Mauryan period, from which they were not far removed in point of time.

Diverse opinions have been expressed on the authenticity of these literary sources, which are difficult to interpret in the absence of historical works or epigraphic records. There is a tendency to discard the brāhmaṇical works in favour of the Buddhist texts.[2] It is said that the attempt of the Dharmasāstras to fit the varṇas into fixed patterns seems to be artificial and speculative.[3] Against this it is urged that what is common to a number of Dharmasūtras must have some basis in fact.[4] It is argued that such a charge used to be made against the scholastic writers of mediaeval Europe and has been rebutted by modern scholars.[5] It will not be proper, however, to place absolute reliance upon either brāhmaṇical or non-brāhmaṇical sources. A correct picture of the social conditions of the pre-Mauryan period can be based only on a co-ordinated study of all kinds of texts.[6] Unfortunately this is to be found neither in the *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I.[7] nor in *The Age of Imperial Unity*, which

1. Jacobi, *SBE*, xxii, Introd., p. XLIII *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 423. Charpentier (*Uttarā.*, Introd, pp. 32 & 48) ascribes them to the period between 300 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era.

2. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, i, 286.

3. Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 101. Author's note, p.x ; Author of the *Census Report of India*, 1901, p. 546 quoted in Baines, *Ethnography*, p. 11.

4 K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Aspects of the Social and Pol. System of Manu*, p. 56 ; cf Hopkins, *CHI*, i, 293-4.

5. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Indian Cameralism*, p. 48.

6. So far these sources have been studied only piecemeal. Jolly's *Hindu Law and Custom* and the encyclopaedic work of Kane on the *History of the Dharmaśāstra* do not treat the contents of the law-books chronologically. Excellent monographs based on the Pāli sources by Fick, Rhys Davids, R. Mehta and A.N. Bose suffer from the same defect. J. C. Jain's *Life as Depicted in the Jain Çanons* lumps together all material without any regard to time and place. In spite of chronological treatment in some cases works on the Indian caste system hardly take into account non-brāhmaṇical sources.

7. Separate chapters (VIII-IX) are devoted to social conditions as known from early Buddhist literature and the Dharmasūtras respectively.

tries to put together materials available in literary sources bearing on the period from 600 B.C. to A.D. 300, but leaves out of consideration the *Dharmasūtras* and the *Gṛhyasūtras*.[1]

There can be no difficulty in accepting facts attested by all these sources ; where such concord is wanting, materials furnished by Buddhist and Jain sources may be taken as reflecting more of actual conditions than the rules laid down in the Dharmasūtras. None of our sources, however, represent the view point of the śūdras and other submerged sections of society. While the Dharmasūtras emphasise the supremacy of the brāhmaṇas, the Buddhist and Jain sources emphasise the primacy of the kṣatriyas, only occasionally showing some lurking sympathy for the lower orders. Moreover the information gleaned from the former is generally limited to Northern India, but that from the latter to north-eastern India.

There is some direct information about the śūdras in the Dharmasūtras, a little in the early Pāli texts and still less in the Jain texts. Perhaps on account of the scantiness of such information it has been argued by Fick that except for the theoretical discussions nothing points to the real existence of the fourth caste, the śūdras, in the early Pāli texts.[2] This view has been rightly questioned by Oldenberg.[3] We can quote instances to show that a person was to be known and his status defined by the name of his caste. Thus the identity of an archer is enquired in terms of his being a kṣatriya, a brāhmaṇa, a vaiśya or a śūdra.[4] A common illustration provided by the Buddha in the course of his discourses is that a wise man is expected to know whether his lady-love is of the kṣatriya, brāhmaṇa, vaiśya or śūdra class.[5] Even T.W. Rhys Davids, who is inclined to reject the priestly evidence in toto, points out that in a general way the fourfold varṇa system in the Buddhist texts corresponds to the actual facts of life.[6] All this establishes beyond doubt that the

1. Ch. XXI.
2. *SONI*, p. 314 ; Dutt, *Origin and the Growth of Caste*, pp. 268-9.
3. *ZDMG*, li, 286.
4. *Majj. N*, i, 429.
5. *Digha N* i, 193 ; *Majj.N.*, ii, 33 and 40.
6. *Buddhist India*, p. 54

śūdras exist as a social class in the Buddhist texts, although their position and functions are not so sharply defined as in the brāhmaṇical laws. That the śūdras constituted the serving class was only implied in the texts of the later Vedic period. But during this period the Dharmasūtras made the explicit and emphatic statement that the duty of the śūdra was to serve the three higher varṇas, and thus to maintain his dependants.[1] He was expected to run his independent house, which he supported by various kinds of occupation. Gautama informs us that the śūdra could live by practising mechanical arts.[2] It seems that sections of the śūdra community worked as weavers, wood-workers, smiths, leather-dressers, potters, painters etc. Although these crafts are mentioned in the early Pāli texts,[3] there is no indication of the varṇa of their followers. The gahapati[4] (householder), who roughly corresponds to the vaiśya in the brāhmaṇical system, is described at one place as living by arts and crafts.[5] If a man of substance could become a gahapati, it is possible that some of the well-to-do śūdra artisans such as the smith Cunda who served a sumptuous dinner to Gautama Buddha and his followers,[6] or the conspicuously rich potter Saddālaputta, who was in possession of five hundred potter's shops and a large number of potters working under him,[7] were gahapatis. This may be also true of the head of the village of a thousand smiths, who gave his daughter in marriage to the Boddhisatta.[8] Although the term gahapati is now here applied to such artisans, it is possible that some of them rose to this position by virtue of their wealth.

We cannot go into the history of crafts and craftsmen, which might well form the subject of a separate monograph. But certain broad points may be noticed. The artisan members of the śūdra varṇa played an important role in the agrarian

1. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I. 1. 1-7 : *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 54-57.
2. *Śilpavṛttiśca.* X. 60.
3. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, pp. 194-204.
4. Known as *gābhāvai* in the Jain texts.
5. *sippādhiṭṭhānā. Ang. N.*, iii, 363.
6. *Digha. N.*, ii, 126
7. *Uvāsag.*, p 184.
8. *Jāt.*, iii, 281.

economy of the pre-Mauryan period. Workers in metal not only made axes, hammers, saws, chisels etc., meant for the carpenters and smiths,[1] but also supplied agriculture with ploughshares, spades and similar implements,[2] which enabled the farmers to provide surplus food for people living in the towns. The urban life[3] and the thriving trade and commerce, which appear for the first time in north-eastern India during this period, could not have been possible without considerable amount of commodity production by the artisans. In the principal towns the crafts were organised into guilds, the chiefs of which stood in a special relation to the king.[4] Certain artisans were attached to the household of the king and enjoyed his patronage. According to the gloss on Pāṇini's grammar these were known as royal artisans, of which the royal barber (*rāja-nāpita*) and the royal potter (*rāja-kulāla*) are especially mentioned.[5] This is also corroborated by a later Jātaka story, which speaks of the royal potter (*rāja-kumbhakāra*) and the royal garland-maker (*rāja-mālākāra*).[6] Some artisans were also attached to the seṭṭhis and gahapatis. We learn that a seṭṭhi had his own tailor (*tunnakāra*), who lived under his patronage and worked for his house.[7] Mention is also made of the weavers of the gahapati, who supplied yarn to him.[8] But the majority of the artisans were probably not attached to such masters ; as instances of independent craftsmen we might cite the villages of the carpentars[9] and smiths,[10] or the artisans living in the towns.[11] Possibly the king exercised some sort of loose control over the artisan villages through the patronage of their chief. Thus the *jeṭṭhaka*

1. *Jāt.*, v, 45.
2. Mehta, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-9.
3. Big cities such as Sāvatthi were twenty in number, and six of them were considered important enough to be the scene of the Buddha's passing away (*Dīgha N*, ii, 147).
4. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *CHI*, i, 206.
5. *Vṛtti* to *Pā.*, VI. 2. 63.
6. *Jāt*, v, 290 and 292.
7. *Ibid.*, vi, 38.
8. *gahapatikassa tantāvāyehi* I *in.*, iii, 258-9. Obviously such a gahapati probably employed them for commodity production for trade.
9. *Jāt*, iv, 159.
10. *Ibid*, 281.
11. *CHI*, i, 208

(head) of the village of a thousand smiths is called a favourite of the king (*rājavallabho*).[1] There was no such control over the scattered families of artisans, who lived in the villages catering to the needs of the agriculturists. They are mentioned as *grāma-śilpins* by Pāṇini.[2] Probably every village had its potter, carpenter, smith, weaver and barber. According to Pānini there were two kinds of carpenters, the *grāmataksa* who worked for daily wages at the house of his clients in the village, and the *kaṭataksa* who worked at his own residence[3] and was "an independent artisan, not particularly bound under engagement to any one."[4] A Jātaka *gāthā* refers to an itinerant smith, who carries his furnace wherever he is called to go.[5] The artisans owned their implements and in some cases had free access to materials. Thus we learn of a brāhmaṇa carpenter, who gained his livelihood by bringing wood from the forest and making carts.[6] This may have been the case with the potter, who could obtain a free supply of clay and fuel, but not with the weavers and workers in metal. Nevertheless, by and large, those who were served by the artisans were not their masters, as was the case in Greece and Rome, where slaves were employed in handicrafts,[7] but just their clients. The only control exercised by the state over the artisans in general lay in the imposition of a kind of *corvee*. It was laid down that in lieu of taxes they would have to work for a day in a month for the king.[8] Otherwise the Dharmaśāstra rules give the impression that those śūdras who worked as craftsmen and artisans were independent people, for these occupations are prescribed for them in case they fail to maintain themselves by service.[9]

1. *Jāt.*, iii, 281.
2. VI, 2.62.
3. *Pā.*, *V.* 4. 95.
4. Gloss on *Pā*, *V.* 4. 95
5. *Jāt*, vi, 189.
6. *Ibid.*, iv, 207.

7. There is a reference to the craft of the home born slave in *Dīgha N.*, i, 51, but this may indicate domestic service. Another reference speaks of slaves and servants being engaged by a brāhmana in trade (*Jāt.*, iv, 16).

8. *śilpino māsi masyekaikam karma kuryuh. Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 31; *Vas. Dh. S.*, XIX. 28.

9. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 53-55; cf. Ghoshal, *IC*, xiv, 26

The mass of the śūdra population seems to have been employed in agricultural operations. The Dharmasūtras assign agriculture to the vaiśyas,[1] who were independent peasant proprietors paying a part of the produce as taxes to the state.[2] But the fact that the śūdras had not to pay any land revenue shows that they were landless labourers. Āpastamba states that the śūdras, who live by washing the feet, are exempt from taxes.[3] This would imply that non-serving śūdras could become taxpayers. But in an older manuscript of this law-book the term *pādāvanektā* does not occur,[4] which suggests that it was inserted later to provide justification for the exemption of the śūdras. Generally therefore the śūdras possessed no taxable property in the form of land, and as such most of them had to work on the land of others. This is amply clear from a passage of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, which presents a classification of the earnings of the four varṇas. It informs us that the brāhmaṇa lives on charities, the kṣatriya on the use of the bow and the arrow, the vaiśya on agriculture and tending of cattle, and the śūdra on the use of the sickle and the carriage of crops on the pole hung over his shoulder.[5]

Other references in the early Pāli texts speak not of the śūdras as such, but of the dāsas (slaves) and kammakaras (hired labourers) as being employed in agricultural operations. There can be little doubt that the landless śūdras were employed as kammakaras. There is evidence to show that the dāsas also mostly belonged to the śūdra varṇa. This can be deduced from the phrase *suddo vā sudda-dāso vā*, which is used by the Buddha to define the position of the śūdra after his enumeration of the first three varṇas.[6] It would be wrong to translate the term *suddā-dāso-vā* as the slave of a workman.[7] The crucial phrase is clearly an example of a case in apposition, and means the śūdra who is a slave. It is inconceivable that here the ksatriyas, the brāh-

1. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 47 ; cf. *Ap. Dh. S.*, II. 11. 28. 1 with the comm. of Haradatta.
2. *Vas. Dh. S.*, I. 42.
3. *Śūdrāśca pādāvanektā. Ap. Dh. S.*, II. 10.26 5.
4. *MS G* according to Buhler's classification
5. *suddassa sandhanam...asitabyabhaṅgim. Majj. N* ,ii. 180.
6. *Dīgha N*, i, 104.
7. *T. W.* Rhys Davids, *SBB*, ii, 128.

maṇas, and the seṭṭhis, who are elsewhere represented as owning slaves, should be left out and the śūdra should be singled out as owning slaves. Therefore Oldenberg is right in inferring that the statement in question does not make any distinction between the śūdra and the dāsa.[1] It is significant that the earliest identification of the śūdra with the slave is found in an early Pāli text and not in the Dharmasūtras, from which this position can be inferred only indirectly. It is only in the post-Mauryan period that Manu states this position in clear and strong words.

Slavery was not exclusively confined to the members of the śūdra varṇa. Even *gāmabhojakas* (village headmen),[2] ministers,[3] brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and men of high birth might be reduced to slavery.[4] In any case the number of such people cannot have been considerable, the mass of the slave labour being supplied by the śūdra varṇa.[5] Slavery arising out of debt, purchase, free will and fear[6] can be rather expected in the case of the people of the lower orders than in that of the members of the higher varṇas. For example, Isidāsī, the daughter of a cart-driver, was carried off as a slave by a merchant on account of her father's failure to pay his debts.[7] But it is indicative of the limited number of slaves during this period that in the Jātakas there is no mention of slaves captured in war.[8]

While some of the slaves, especially women, were employed in domestic service,[9] others were engaged in agriculture. The slaves and hired labourers worked even on smaller holdings,[10] but more often on larger plots. In the early Pāli texts there

1. *ZDMG*, li, 286. N.K. Dutt writes that in the Buddhist literature the slaves are nowhere called by the name of śūdra (*op. cit.*, p. 272). This case provides a clear implication to the contrary.
2. *Jāt.*, i, 200.
3. *Ibid.*, vi, 389.
4. Bandyopadhyaya, "Slavery in Ancient India", *Calcutta Review* (1930), No. 8, p. 254.
5. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of N. India*, ii. 423.
6. *Jāt.*, vi, 285 (*gāthā*); *Vin.*, iv, 224.
7. *s. v.* Isidāsī Therī, *Pāli Dict. of Proper Names*, i, 323.
8. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
9. *dāsī-bhāraḥ*. Pā., VI, 1.42; *Sūyagaḍam*, I. 14.8; *Jat.*, iii, 59, 98-99.
10. *CHI*, i, 207; *Vin.*, I. 240. cf. *Sūya.*, II. 1.13 which refers to both large and small fields. The dāsas and kammakaras of the Śākyas and Koliyas were employed in irrigating their fields (*Jāt.*, v, 413).

are at least two examples of big farms in Magadha, each of a thousand karīsas (8000 acres according to Childers,)[1] and of another field in Kāsī being ploughed with five hundred ploughs,[2] all owned by the brāhmaṇas. There is also reference to a village trader depositing five hundred ploughs with a town merchant, showing thereby that he possessed large landed property.[3] Five hundred or a thousand may be conventional numbers, but they provide an indication of the tendency towards consolidation of holdings, which reached its climax with the state control of agriculture in the Mauryan period. It is obvious that larger holdings could not have been worked without a considerable number of dāsas and kammakaras.

We have hardly any idea about the numerical strength of slaves and hired labourers in relation to their employers. Even in the case of Attica, where statistics are available, it is very difficult to reach agreement on the proportion of the free to slave population.[4] But the paucity of data in the case of India makes it much more difficult to obtain any definite information on this point. A later *sutta* states that few are those who abstain from accepting male and female slaves.[5] The brāhmaṇical theory that the śūdras are meant for the service of the three higher varṇas is broadly reflected in the employment of slaves and labourers by the brāhmaṇas,[6] the kṣatriyas,[7] and the seṭṭhis and the gahapatis.[8] According to the Dharmasūtras the brāhmaṇas could exchange slaves for slaves but could not sell them.[9] All this would suggest that slavery prevailed on a considerable scale, but in any case it cannot be compared to the position in Attica where in the 5th century B. C. slaves comprised about a third of the total population.[10]

1. *Jāt.*, iii, 293 ; iv, 276.
2. *Sut. Nipā.*, I.4.
3. *Jāt.*, ii, 181.
4. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity*, pp. 8-9.
5. *Sut. Nipā.*, V. 472.
6. *Jāt.*, iv, 15 ; *Majj. N.*, ii. 186.
7. *Jāt.*, v, 413.
8. *Vin.*, i, 243, 272 ; ii, 154.
9. *Ap.Dh. S*, I. 7 20.15 ; *Vas. Dh. S.*, II. 39 ; *Gaut. Dh. S.*, VII. 16
10. Westermann, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

The Dharmasūtras throw some light on the living conditions of the members of the śūdra varṇa. Gautama provides that the śūdra servant should use the shoes, umbrellas, garments and mats, which are thrown away by the people of the higher varṇas.[1] The same picture is obtained from a Jātaka story, which informs us that clothes gnawed by rats were intended for the use of the dāsas and the kammakaras.[2] Gautama further adds that the remnants of food are meant for the śūdra servant.[3] The *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* instructs the pupil to put down the remains of food left in his dish either near an uninitiated ārya or near a śūdra slave belonging to his teacher,[4] which clearly implies that the remains of food were to be eaten by the śūdra servant. This is also attested by the *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra*, which lays down that, in a three-day vow undertaken after the completion of his studies, a student should not give the leavings of his food to a śūdra.[5] Pāṇini refers to special terms applied to food leavings, which were presumably given to domestic servants.[6] We learn from a passage of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that the sick wife of a merchant preserved the ghee which she had vomited, for the use of the dāsas or the kammakaras who might apply it to their feet or burn it in a lamp.[7] It is also recorded that five hundred people accompanied the Order of the monks led by the Buddha in the hope of eating the remnants of their food.[8] All this would show that there was nothing unusual about the śūdra servants eating the remnants of the food of their masters.

Āpastamba expresses the noble sentiment that a person should stint himself, his wife and children but not his slave who works for him,[9] but we can hardly believe that this maxim

1. *jīrṇānyupānacchatravāsaḥ kūrcāṃś*. X 58.
2. *Jāt.*, I, 372. (present story).
3. X. 59
4. *antardhāne vā śūdrāya. Ap. Dh. S*, I, 1.3 40. with the comm. of the *Ujjvalā*.
5. I. 2.8.1-2 (*SBE* tr.).
6. Agrawala, *op. cit*, p. 114.
7. *varaṃ etaṃ sappi dāsānaṃ vā kammakarānaṃ vā pādabhañjanaṃ vā pādippakaraṇe vā āsittaṃ. Vin.*, iv, 272.
8. *Vin.*, I, 220.
9. *kāmamātmānaṃ bhāryāṃ putraṃ voparundhyānna tveva dāsakarmakaram. Ap. Dh. S.*, II. 4.9.11.

was taken very seriously, though it shows that in the better households slaves were well fed and kindly treated. The slaves and hired labourers may not have been starved, but in general the food served to them was definitely inferior to that of their masters. Thus a brāhmaṇa monk boasts that even his slaves and servants eat rice and meat, and use clothes and ointment made in Kāsi,[1] which shows that ordinarily such people were given inferior food and dress. A similar claim is made by the Buddha, who says that while in the houses of others the dāsas and kammakaras are fed on rice with sour gruel, in the house of his father they receive rice, meat and milk.[2] That the slave received a fixed type of food is clear from the repeated use of the abusiv ephrase *dāsa-paribhoga*.[3] Sour gruel was the food of a poor man working for wages.[4] A Jātaka story refers to a potter's hireling, who after a full day's work with the clay and the wheel "sat all clay-besmeared on a bundle of straw eating balls of barley groat dipped in a little soup."[5]

The phrase that a person lived a hard life on a workman's wages commonly occurs in the Jātakas.[6] At one place the workman, who is the Boddhisatta, bewails his lot in these words : "I get a *māsaka* or a half-*māsaka* for my wages and can hardly support my mother."[7] The daily earning of a grass-cutter is mentioned as two *māsakas*, which he gets in the market in return for the grass mown.[8] The *māsaka* of this period was probably a punch-marked copper coin. According to the commentaries of the early Pāli texts this coin occupied such a low position in the scale of currency that it was considered next to nothing.[9] The *māsaka* of the later period was one-sixteenth in value of the silver paṇa,[10] but we are not certain whether this represents its

1. *dāsakammakarāpi no sālimaṃsodanaṃ bhuñjanti, kāsikavatthaṃ nivāsenti*. *Jāt.*, i. 355 (present story).
2. *kaṇajakaṃ bhojanaṃ diyyati*. *Aṅg. N.*, i, 145.
3. *Ibid.*, i, 451, 459.
4. *Ibid.*, iii, 406-7.
5. *Ibid.*, vi, 372.
6. *paresaṃ bhatiṃ katvā kiccheṇa jīvati*. *Jāt.*, i, 475 ; ii, 139 : iii, 325, 406, 444.
7. *Jat.*, iii, 326.
8. *nagaradvāre vikiṇitvā māsake gahetvā*. *Jāt.*, iii, 130.
9. *s. v.* māsaka, *Pāli-Eng. Dic.*
10. S. K. Chakravorty, *Ancient Indian Numismatics*, pp. 56.

relation to the silver paṇa in pre-Mauryan times. During this period the *māsaka* counted in value only when it amounted to to five in number,[1] but even this paltry sum was not given to a wage-earner. Therefore it is not possible to make much of the story in the *Gaṅgamāla Jātaka*,[2] in which a water-carrier proposes to enjoy a city festival along with his wife with the meagre savings of one *māsaka*, each contributing half of it. It is characteristic of the didactic nature of the story that the water-carrier refuses to part with his petty sum of a half-*māsaka* even when he is offered unlimited wealth by the Boddhisatta king Udaya. Ultimately he gets half the kingdom, but realises the evils of desire and becomes an ascetic to achieve its final extinction. The evident moral is that a person could remain satisfied even with half a *māsaka*, although it would be ideal to do even without that. As the *gāthā* says : "Little desire is not enough, and much but brings pain".[3] On the whole the estimate of Fick that wages of the day-labourers in the Jātakas were hardly sufficient to enable them to eke out their livelihood seems to be fair. This may well apply to large sections of the śūdras, who worked as hired labourers.

There does not seem to be much difference between the various sub-sections of the serving population. A Jain text places slaves, servants (pessas) and beasts of burden in the same category.[4] The Pāli texts make frequent mention of the dāsas, pessas and kammakaras.[5] The pessas we remessengers or servants, who were sent on minor errands. As noticed earlier, there was no difference either in the nature of work[6] assigned to the dāsas and the kammakaras or in the type of food given to them.[7] It will be shown later that if they committed offences they were subjected to the same punishments. There is nothing to show that socially the hired labourer was classed beneath

1. *The Book of the Discipline*, i, Tr. I. B. Horner in *SBB*, x, pp. 71-2.
2. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 428.
3. *appāpi kāmā na alaṃ, bahūhi pi na tappati. Jāt.*, iii, 446-50.
4. *Sūya.*, I, 4.2.18.
5. *Digha N.*, i, 141; *Aṅg. N.* ii, 207-8; iii 37; iv, 266, 393.
6. *Gaut. D.h S.*, XX. 4.
7. *Jāt.*, iii, 300.

the domestic slave.[1] Perhaps the difference between the dāsas and the kammakaras lay in the nature of their relation with their masters. In contrast to the kammakara, the slave was regarded as the property of the master[2] and could be inherited and shared.[3] The absolutely servile status of the slave was indicated by his distinguishing mark, which seems to have been a shaved head with a topknot.[4] At one place, however, along with the dāsas the kammakaras also are reckoned among the property of a seṭṭhi.[5] This indicates the tendency to reduce the hired labourer to the status of a slave. A Jātaka story shows that while the slaves lived in the house of their masters, the kammakaras went to their lodgings in the evening.[6] But we do not know how far this was a general practice. Obviously the life of the hireling was sometimes harder than that of the slave.[7] He could not enjoy that security of livelihood which was assured to the slave or the permanent domestic servant. Gautama lays down that the *ārya*, under whose protection the śūdra places himself, should support him if he becomes unable to work.[8] But the practice did not conform to this precept, for a *gāthā* states that people throw away the outworn servant like a she-elephant.[9]

There seems to be some difference between the kammakara and the *bhaṭaka* (wage earner).[10] In the *Vinaya Piṭaka* the kammakara is defined as a bhaṭaka who is *āhataka*. The authors of the *Pali-English Dictionary* interpret the term *āhataka* as 'beaten'. This would mean that the kammakara is a worker who can be beaten—a definition which sounds curious and is not given even in the case of a dāsa. Perhaps the term *āhataka* is not cognated with the Sanskrit word *āhata*,[11] but with the term *āhṛta*,

1. References quoted in *CHI*, i, 203, fn. 8 do not support this view.
2. *Sutta-nipāta*, 769; *Oraiya*, verse 6; *Uttara.*, III. 17; *Sūyagaḍam*, II. 7 1.
3. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XXVIII. 13.
4. *Jāt*, vi, 135.
5. *Ibid.*, iii, 129.
6. .. *attano vasanaṭṭhānaṃ gantvā. Jāt.*, iii, 445.
7. *CHI*, i, 205.
8. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 61.
9. *yāvatāsīṃsati posa tāvad eva pavīṇati; aṭṭhāpāye jahanti. Jāt.*, iii, 387.
10. Also written as *bhataka*.
11. This derivation is adopted in *s.v.* āhataka, *Pāli-Eng. Dic.*

which means taken, seized or brought.[1] This would suggest that the kammakaras were attached to their master in a speical way. They were probably brought under his control either on account of their failure to pay debts or owing to having their habitations on his land. They seem to have been in the position of semi-slaves, who could be sometimes treated even as an item of property. Thus there is little evidence for the view that in the pre-Mauryan period the kammakaras were free labourers who entered into contracts as to their work and wages and that in the case of disputes wages were settled by experts.[2] This view better represents the position of the *bhṛtakas*, whose relation with their employers was comparatively free from elements of subjection. The bhṛtaka lived on wages, i.e. *bhṛti*, which is mentioned by Pāṇini either in the sense of service for hire or simply as wages.[3] It seems that the bhṛtaka was hired for a particular period.[4] According to an early Jain text there were four kinds of bhṛtakas : (i) the *divasabhayaga* who worked on daily wages, (ii) the *jattabhayaga* who was engaged for the duration of a journey, (iii) the *ucattabhayaga* who was employed on contract to complete the work in an agreed time, (iv) the *kabhālabhayaga* (such as an earth digger) who was paid according to the amount of work done.[5] As workers on contract some artisans may have been also employed as bhṛtakas. A later Jātaka distinguishes between the bondsmen (*attano purisā*) who are asked to keep watch over the various portions of their master's rice fields, and a *bhataka* who gets a salary (*bhati*) for the same work and is liable to the payment of compensation in the case of any damage to the crops.[6] A *gāthā* states that the *purisa* should always work for the interest of the person in whose house he is fed.[7] The use of the phrase *dāsakammakaraporisa* shows that the bondsman served either as

1. An alternative derivation from the term *āhitaka* (i.e. pledged) is not favoured by grammatical rules.
2. Bandyopadhyaya, *Eco. Life and Progress in Anc. India*, p. 94.
3. *Pā.*, I. 3.36 ; III. 2.22.
4. *Ibid.*, V. 1. 80.
5. *Ṭhaṇāṅga*, IV. 271 with the comm. of Abhayadevasūri.
6. *Jāt.*, iv, 276-8.
7. *yasseva ghare bhuñjeyya bhogaṃ tasseva atthaṃ puriso careyya. Jāt.*, vi, 426.

a slave or a hired labourer.[1] and that there was not much distinction between these different types of workers.

We can have some idea of the economic position of the śūdras from some rules governing the relations between the employers and the employees. It is characteristic of the predominantly agrarian and pastoral economy of the pre-Mauryan period that the rules of this kind refer to the relations between the master on the one hand and his agricultural labourers and herdsmen on the other. It is laid down by Āpastamba that, if the servant in tillage gives up his work, he shall be given physical punishment.[2] The same provision applies to the herdsman who abandons tending the cattle ;[3] it is further provided that in such a case the cattle shall be entrusted to some other herdsman.[4] If the loss of the cattle is due to the negligence of the herdsman, he is held responsible for it.[5] Gautama does not refer to these provisions, but he ordains that the master of the cattle or his herdman, as the case might be, shall be called to account for any damage caused to anyone by the cattle in his charge.[6] None of these lawgivers state the obligations of the master towards his herdsman or agricultural labourers. Thus, compared to their masters, these wage-earners were placed in a disadvantageous position.

The economic disabilities imposed on the śūdras by the Dharmasūtras shed further light on their material condition. Reference has been made to the imposition of compulsory service on the artisans for a day in a month by the king. Gautama lays down that in order to defray the expenses of the wedding of a girl, and when engaged in a rite enjoined by the sacred law, a person could take money by fraud or force from a śūdra.[7] Members of the vaiśya, the kṣatriya and perhaps of the brāhmaṇa varṇas, who did not observe the rites and duties of their class,

1. *Jāt.*, iv; *Aṅg. N.*, i, 206 ; *Vin.*, i, 240.
2. II. 11. 28. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, 3.
4. *Ibid.*, 4.
5. *Ibid.*, 6.
6. XII. 16-7.
7. *dravyādānaṃ vivāhasiddhyarthaṃ dharmatantrasaṃyoge ca śūdrāt. Gaut. Dh. S.*, XXVIII. 24 with Haradatta's comm.

could also be subjected to this procedure in the order of their social status, but only when a śūdra was not available.[1] This law, which provides a license for the extortions from the śūdra community by the members of the upper varṇas, is not to be found in any other Dharmasūtra, although it has its parallel in the *Manu Smṛti*.[2] It may be a later insertion, which reflects the tendency of a brāhmaṇical school to exploit the śūdra to the full.

The law of inheritance contains discriminatory provisions relating to the share of the son of a śūdra wife. According to Baudhāyana in the case of issues from the wives of different castes, four shares would go to the brāhmaṇa, three to the kṣatriya, two to the vaiśya and one to the śūdra son.[3] In such a case Vasiṣṭha provides for the shares of the sons of only the three higher varṇas, leaving out the śūdra son.[4] He quotes the opinion of others as stating that the śūdra son may be regarded as a member of the family but not an heir,[5] a provision which is confined by Baudhāyana[6] to the case of the niṣāda son of a brāhmaṇa father and śūdra mother.[7] Gautama provides for the disinheritance of the śūdra son of a brāhmaṇa in very clear and emphatic terms. According to him if the brāhmaṇa died without male issue, though his son by the śūdra wife might be obedient like a pupil, yet he could receive only a provision for maintenance out of the estate of his deceased father.[8] Thus it would appear that of the authors of the Dharmasūtras only Baudhāyana provides for the share of the śūdra son of a brāhmaṇa, Vasiṣṭha and Gautama being opposed to this. Possibly the liberalism of Baudhāyana was due to his connections with the south, where brāhmaṇism had not penetrated deeply. Further,the provisions show that they related only to the

1. *anyatrāpi śūdrād bahupaśorhīnakarmaṇaḥ. Ibid.*, XXVIII. 25 with Haradatta's comm.
2. *Manu*, XI. 13.
3. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 2.3.10.
4. *Vas. Dh. S.*, XVIII. 47-50.
5. *śūdrāputra eva ṣaṣṭho bhavatītyāhurityete dāyādabāndhavāḥ. Vas. Dh. S.*, XVII. 38.
6. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 2.3.32.
7. *Ibid.*, II. 2. 3. 10.
8. *śūdrāputra'pyanapatyasya śuśrūṣuścellabhet vṛttimūlamantarāśritidhinā. Gaut. Dh. S*, XXVIII. 37.

śūdra son of a brāhmaṇa. It is not clear whether such rules of inheritance applied to the śūdra sons of the kṣatriya and the vaiśya, although this is very probable. There is no corroborative evidence in the light of which the actual operation of these rules can be known. At any rate these could affect only a fringe of the śūdra population, for the regular marriage of śūdra women with persons of higher varṇas was not a widespread practice.

In an appraisal of the general economic position of the śūdras during the pre-Mauryan period, a special note has to be taken of their characterization as the serving class, which was first clearly stated during this time. It was this function of service which imparted homogeneity to the otherwise heterogeneous elements of that varṇa. As members of the serving class, along with the vaiśya peasants,[1] the śūdras performed the role of the primary producers, and thus provided the material foundations for the growth of society. As agricultural labourers they helped to open to cultivation the thickly wooded areas of Kośala and Magadha, which in the texts[2] are referred to as being divided into large and small holdings worked by slaves and hired labourers. As will be noticed later, Kauṭilya advocated the policy of employing śūdra labour for the breaking of virgin soil in the new settlements. Further, as artisans, the śūdras contributed to technological development and produced marketable commodities, which led to the rise of numerous towns with their thriving trade and commerce.

But the śūdras did not enjoy the same standards of living as the members of the higher varṇas, who employed them. Repeatedly in the Pāli texts the khattiya, the brāhmaṇa and the gahapati are called *mahāsāla* (opulent),[3] implying thereby that the dāsas, pessas, kammakaras, purisas and bhatakas were not in that fortunate position. Some of the rich śūdra artisans

1. It was laid down by Gautama that the vaiśya and the śūdra should make their gains by labour. *viśviṣṭaṃ vaiśyaśūdrayoḥ. Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 42.

2. Cf. Kosambi, "Ancient Kosala and Magadha", *JBBRAS*, xxvii, 195-201.

3. *Aṅg. N.*, iv, 239; *Jāt.*, i, 49. Literally the term means 'having great halls'. Phrases of similar import for indicating rich people are even now used in popular parlance in Bihār.

might be prosperous gahapatis, but in a predominantly agrarian economy, land being mostly in the hands of the brāhmaṇas, the kṣatriyas[1] and the seṭṭhis,[2] most of the śūdras had to live on wages in the fixation of which they had no voice. It is said that 'the great mass of the people were well-to-do peasantry or handicraftsmen, mostly with land of their own'.[3] This may apply to the vaiśya or the gahapati class but not to the śūdras, who had to live by working on the land of others. They were condemned to this position not simply because of their birth, but because of their birth in poor families. This point is clearly underlined in the course of a Buddhist argument to disprove the brāhmaṇa's claim to supremacy. It is said that, if the śūdra grew wealthy, he could engage not only another śūdra as his servant, but also another kṣatriya, brāhmaṇa or vaiśya.[4] Normally in such cases, which would be few, the contradiction between the low social status and the high economic position of a person could be resolved by raising him in the social scale. In later times such a policy was practised by the brāhmaṇas in assimilating the foreign ruling chiefs to the kṣatriya fold. It is possible, therefore, that those śūdras who were favoured by fortune could rise to a high social status.

As producing masses the śūdras correspond to the slaves and helots in contemporary Greek city states. Theoretically just as the Greek citizens could claim the service of their unfree men, so also the Indian dvijas (twice-born) and āryas could claim the labour-power of the śūdras. But in several respects the economic position of the śūdras was different. Neither the śūdra agricultural labourers nor the śūdra artisans, especially the latter, were so completely at the mercy of their employers as the slaves of Greece and Rome. Unlike the slave in Greece,[5] the śūdra

1. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 119. According to Gautama (X. 5-6) agriculture, trade and usury are lawful for a brāhmana provided he does not carry on the work himself.

2. For instance see Fis'er, "The Problem of the Seṭṭhi in Buddhist Jātakas", *AO*, xxii, 238-265.

3. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 102.

4. *Majj. N.*, ii, 84-85.

5. An exception is to be made in the case of the Cretan agricultural slave who could own property, in which the dowry rights of the female slave were protected. Westermann, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

held property, not sufficient enough to be taxable, but subject to some other liabilities. Thus the law imposed on him the obligation to maintain his master of a higher varṇa by drawing upon his savings, if the latter fell on evil days.[1] It was further laid down that the vaiśya and the śūdra should overcome their misfortunes by means of their property.[2] The use of the phrase *dāsa-bhoga* shows that even the slave held property,[3] though to hold it may have required the consent of his master. Perhaps on account of these differences the varṇa system, which mainly rested on the śūdra class as its chief source of labour-power, proved to be a more effective organization of production than slavery. Though functioning in an evidently larger area and population than those of Greece, it never felt the necessity of making the śūdras work under the same conditions as the slaves and helots.

The politico-legal status of the śūdras during this period seems to be a counterpart of their economic position. In contrast to their importance in later Vedic polity they lost their place in the political organization of the period. According to Āpastamba the king could appoint only the āryas, i.e. the members of the first three varṇas, as officials in charge of the villages and towns.[4] Lesser officers serving under them were also required to fulfil the same qualifications.[5]

Āpastamba also lays down that the king's court should be adorned by pure and truthful āryas, who were to act as the councillors and judges of the king.[6] In these references the term *ārya* is rightly interpreted as the member of the first three varṇas.[7] No śūdra was ever regarded as an ārya, any more than he could be 'reborn'.[8] But it is wrong to think that even during

1. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 62-3.
2. *kṣatriyo bāhuvīryeṇa taredāpadamātmanaḥ dhanena vaiśyaśūdrau. Vas. Dh S.* XXVI 16.
3. *Vin.*, iii, 136.
4. *grāmeṣu nagareṣu ca āryāñcchucīn satyaśīlān prajāguptaye nidadhyāt. Āp. Dh. S*, II. 10.26.4.
5. *Ibid*, II. 10.26.5.
6. *Ibid.*, II. 10.25.12-13.
7. Haradatta's comm. to *Āp. Dh. S.*, II. 10.25.13.
8. Hopkins, *CHI*, i, 240.

this period the use of the term *ārya* indicates racial distinction.[1] Thus the term *ārya-kṛta* in Pāṇini[2] evidently means one who is made free.[3] It is stated in a Buddhist text that among the Kāmbojas and Yavanas the āryas become dāsas and the dāsas become āryas,[4] which clearly shows that the āryas were free, in contrast to the dāsas who were unfree. Therefore the political distinction between the āryas and the śūdra seems to have been of the same type as that between the citizen and the non-citizen in Greece and Rome. Since the śūdra was considered unfree, it was not thought proper to associate him with the work of administration. It would thus appear that the lower classes had no influence in the affairs of the states of the time. Thus a Jain source mentions various categories of kṣatriyas and brāhmaṇas attending the assembly of the king, but does not speak of the gahapatis (i.e. vaiśyas) or the śūdras.[5] It seems that normally even the vaiśyas could not be appointed as councillors, although according to the Pāli texts the seṭṭhis, who received the *seṭṭhichatta* (the canopy of a seṭṭhi) from the king,[6] may have been given some administrative functions. A Jātaka informs us that a tailor's son was made treasurer (*bhaṇḍāgārika*),[7] but such instances are rare.

It is said that one of the most powerful dynasties of this period was of śūdra extraction and that the śūdras acquired supreme power in the lower Gaṅgā valley.[8] These statements can be considered true only in so far as they indicate the low birth of the Nanda rulers. They should not be taken to mean that political power passed into the hands of the śūdra community; for there is nothing to show that the rise of the Nandas put an end to the political disabilities of the śūdra.

As to their role in the republican governments of this period, it has been rightly said that the "ruling assembly in the

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Pā.*, IV. 1.30.
3. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, p. 79.
4. *Dīgha N.*, ii, 149.
5. *Sūyagaḍam*, III.1.9.
6. Fischer, *AO*, xii, 261.
7. *Jāt.*, iv, 43.
8. Raychaudhuri, *An Advanced History of India*, p. 71.

Saṃgha-Gaṇa consisted of a ksatriya aristocracy ranking higher in the social scale than the brāhmaṇas and the gahapatis, not to speak of inferior classes."[1] On the basis of a passage from the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* Jayaswal says that the śūdra could be a member of the *paura* (relating to the town or capital) body which was consulted by the king.[2] Assuming that the paura was a corporate body, Jayaswal's interpretation in the case of the śūdra is not borne out by the commentary of Maskarin, who explains the term *paura* as *samānasthānavāsī*, i.e. an inhabitant of the same place.[3]

As regards the right to appear as witnesses in the law courts, Baudhāyana extends this privilege to the members of all the varṇas with certain exceptions.[4] He does not debar the śūdra from acting as a witness in the cases of the higher varṇas,—a provision which is also noticeable in the law-book of Vasiṣṭha.[5] According to Gautama the śūdras could be summoned as witnesses, but in the opinion of his commentators this eventuality could occur only when the twice-born with the requisite qualifications were not available.[6] It is not clear whether this relates to their presence as witnesses in the cases of the twice-born or in their own cases. Probably it refers to the former situation. Vasiṣṭha, however, clearly states that a twice-born of the same varṇa can appear as a witness for men of his own class, good śūdras for good śūdras and men of low birth for similar people.[7] Good śūdras were evidently those who strictly followed the brāhmaṇical precepts regarding their duties. This would suggest that bad śūdras were not to be entertained as witnesses in the suits of good śūdras. Thus the later authors of the Dharmasūtras, i. e. Gautama and Vasiṣṭha, exhibit the tendency to exclude the śūdra witnesses from the cases of the higher varṇas. We have no means of finding out whether this discrimination was observed, but it is in

1. Ghoshal, "The Constitutional Significance of Saṃgha-Gaṇa in the post-Vedic Period." *IC*, xii, 62.
2. *Hindu Polity*, ii, 69-70.
3. Comm. to *Gaut. Dh. S.*, VI. 10.
4. *catvāro varṇāḥ putraṇaḥ sākṣinah syuh. Bau. Dh. S.*, I. 10. 19.13.
5. *sarveṣu sarva eva vā. Vas. Dh. S.*, XVI. 29
6. Maskarin and Haradatta on *api śūdrah. Gaut. Dh. S.*, XIII. 5.
7. ...*śūdrāṇāṃ santaḥ śūdrāścāntyānāmantyayonayaḥ. Vas. Dh. S.*, XVI.30.

keeping with the spirit of the varṇa legislation which pervaded the Dharmasūtras. It may be noted, however, that in the taking of testimony in Greece during this period the slave might be subjected to interrogation under the use of the bastinado or the rack,[1] but such cruel measures for extracting confessions are not prescribed in the Dharmasūtras.

Gautama lays down that members of the various castes, and guilds of cultivators, traders, herdsmen, moneylenders and artisans could administer their affairs according to their respective customs, provided they did not override the dharma law.[2] In other words those sections of the śūdras who were organised into guilds of artisans or castes could follow their own rules in the administration of their internal affairs. But if they were involved in civil or criminal suits with the members of the other varṇas, they might be subjected to legal discriminations. As noticed earlier, in civil law the śūdra son of a brāhmana father could only claim either the smallest share in inheritance or no share at all.[3]

In criminal cases also the Dharmasūtras provide no equality before the law. According to the law of Gautama if a brāhmaṇa abused a kṣatriya or a vaiśya, he would have to pay a fine, but if he abused a śūdra, he would go scot-free.[4] Further, if the śūdra intentionally reviled the twice-born man by criminal abuse, or criminally assaulted him with blows, he was liable to be deprived of the limb with which he offended.[5] Āpastamba bluntly states that, if the śūdra abuses a law-abiding ārya, his tongue should be perforated.[6] Penances provided for the expiation of the sins of abusing respectable persons and speaking minor untruths also discriminate against the śūdra, who was ordered to fast for seven days in such cases ;[7] on the other hand a member

1. Westermann, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
2. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XI. 20-21.
3. Supra, pp. 100-1.
4. *brāhmaṇastu kṣatriye pañcāśat, tadardham vaiśye, na śūdre kiñcit. Gaut. Dh. S.*, XII. 11-13.
5. *śūdro dvijātīnatisandhāyābhihatya vāgdaṇḍapāruṣyābhyāmaṅgam mocyo yenopahanyāt. Gaut. Dh. S.*, XII. 1.
6. *jihvācchedanaṃ śūdrasya āryaṃ dhārmikam ākrośataḥ.* *Āp. Dh. S.*, II.10.27.14.
7. This is also prescribed for women. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I.9.26.4.

of the first three varṇas had merely to abstain from milk, pungent condiments and salt for three days only.[1] And finally Āpastamba and Gautama lay down that, if in conversation, sitting, lying down or on the road, the śūdra assumed a position equal to that of the twice-born man, he should be flogged.[2]

Laws relating to adultery provide the most severe punishment for the śūdra. Āpastamba lays down that, if a śūdra commits adultery with an āryā., i.e. a female member of the first three varṇas, he should be put to death,[3] while the woman might be purified by a penance if no child was born from their adulterous intercourse.[4] But, according to the same authority, if an ārya commits the same offence with the śūdra woman, he should be banished.[5] In the case of theft, the law, as laid down by Gautama, imposes the smallest fine upon the śūdra, which increases if the offender belongs to a higher varṇa. Thus, if the śūdra is required to pay eight times the value of the stolen property, the brāhmaṇa has to pay sixty-four times.[6] While it may indicate the former's inability to pay higher fines, the law presupposes a higher standard of conduct on the part of the members of the higher varṇas, who were little expected to commit thefts. This is in keeping with the provision that only members of the first three varṇas should be appointed officials, one of whose chief functions was to protect the people against thieves.[7]

So far as the operation of these criminal laws is concerned, a passage from the *Majjhima Nikāya* shows that in cases of adultery and theft the same punishment applied to the offender, irrespective of his varṇa.[8] Therefore the discriminatory laws of the Dharmasūtras in this regard need not be taken too seriously.

1. *Ibid.*, I.9.26.3.

2. *sace pathi sayyāyāmāsana iti samībhavato daṇḍatāḍanam. Āp. Dh. S.*, II. 10.27.13 ; *Gaut Dh. S.*, XII. 7.

3. *vadhyaḥ śūdra āryāyām. Āp. Dh. S.*, II.10.27-9.

4. *Ibid.*, II. 10.27. 10.

5. *nāryā āryaḥ śūdrāyām. Āp. Dh. S.*, II. 10.27.8.

6. *aṣṭapādyaṃ steyakilviṣaṃ śūdrasya; dviguṇottarāṇītareṣāṃ prativarṇam. Gaut. Dh. S.*, XII. 15-16.

7. *Āp. Dh. S.*, II. 10.26.6-8.

8. *evaṃ sante ime cattāro vaṇṇā samasamā honti.* ii, 88.

But the non-brāhmaṇical sources show that the offending dāsas, kammakaras and other classes of workers were subjected to corporal punishments by their masters. Thus we can cite two instances of beating, in which the victims are female slaves.[1] In one case the offence is the neglect of work[2] and in another the failure to bring her wages back to her master.[3] Although there is mention of a slave who was petted and permitted to learn writing and handicrafts, he lived under the perpetual fear of getting 'beaten, imprisoned, branded and fed on slave's fare'[4] at the slightest fault.

Corporal punishment was, however, not only confined to the dāsas, who were not *sui juris*. Along with them the pessas and the kammakaras are frequently described in the Buddhist dialogues as working under the king harried by stripes and fear, weeping with tears on their faces.[5] A simile from a Jain text informs us that the preṣyas (messengers or servants) are made to work by being beaten with sticks.[6] Such being the treatment of workers who seem to have committed no fault, the fate of the guilty can hardly be expected to be better. That the smallest offence of the wage-earners was visited with the most severe punishments forms the subject of the following passage from the *Sūyagaḍam* : "A man will (occasionally) severely punish even the smallest offence of his domestics, viz., a slave or messenger or hired servant or vassal (*bhāgilla-bhāgika*)[7] or parasite ; e.g. punish him, pull out his hair, beat him, put him in irons, in fetters, in stocks, into prison, screw up in a pair of shackles (his hands and feet) and break them, cut off his hands or feet or ears or nose or lips or head or face (?),[8] pierce his feet,

1. *CHI*, i, 205.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Jāt.*, i. 402.
4. *Ibid*, i, 451.
5. *daṇḍa-tajjitā bhaya-tajjitā assumukhā rudamānā parikammāni karonti. Majj N.*, i, 344 ; *Saṃy.N.*, i, 76 ; *Aṅg.N.*, ii, 207-9; iii, 172 ; cf. *Dīgha N.*, i, 141.
6. *Sūyagaḍaṃ*, I. 5.2.5.
7. One who gets the sixth part of the products (e.g. of agriculture) of the work for which he is hired. *SBE*, xlv, 374, fn. 9.
8. Jacobi finds it difficult to translate the two words *vegaccha hiya* and *aṅgacchahiya*. *Ibid.*, 375. fn. 1.

tear out his eyes, teeth, tongue, hang him, brush him, whirl him round, impale him, lacerate him, pour acids (in his wounds), belabour him with cutting-grass, bind him to a lion's tail (!), or a bull's tail, burn him in a wood on fire, let him be devoured by crows and vultures, stop his food and drink, keep him a prisoner for life, let him die any of these horrid deaths."[1]

The above passage describes the conduct of the unrighteous people, who were evidently outside the fold of Jainism, and therefore may not be free from an element of exaggeration. But it undoubtedly shows that the master inflicted different kinds of cruel punishments not only on his slaves but on various other categories of workers employed by him. All this would suggest that corporal punishment for the offending members of the serving class was not uncommon though the artisan members of the śūdra varṇa were perhaps free from this humiliation. In Greece also the slave might pay for minor misdeeds with corporal punishment, but the free man was exempt from this indignity.[2]

For the first time the Dharmasūtra law introduces different rates of wergeld for the members of the different varṇas, there being no such distinction in Vedic times. Three of them lay down that for slaying a kṣatriya the offender should give one thousand cows, for slaying a vaiśya one hundred cows and for slaying a śūdra ten cows, with a bull in every case.[3] Baudhāyana says that the amount should go to the king,[4] but

1 *jā vi ya se bāhiriyā parisā bhavai, taṃ jahādāse i vā pese i vā bhayae i vā bhāille i vā kammakarae i vā bhoyaṇaṇise i vā tesiṃ pi ya ṇaṃ annayaṃrasi ahālahugaṃsi avarāhaṃsi sayameva garuyaṃ daṇḍaṃ nivattei. taṃ jahāṇaṃ daṇḍeha. imaṃ muṇḍeha; imaṃ taṇjeha, imaṃ tāleha, imaṃ adayabandhanaṃ kareha, imaṃ niyalabandhanaṃ kareha, imaṃ haḍibandhanaṃ kareha, imaṃ cāragabandhanaṃ kareha, imaṃ niyalajuyala saṃkoḍiyaṃdiyaṃ kareha, imaṃ hatthacchinnayaṃ kareha, imaṃ pāyacchinnaṃ kareha, imaṃ kaṇṇachinnahaṃ kareha, imaṃ nakkaoṭṭhasīsamuhachinnayaṃ kareha, veyagacchaḍiyaṃ aṅgacchaḍiyaṃ pakkhāphoḍiyaṃ kareha, imaṃ nayaṇuppāḍiyaṃ kareha, imaṃ daṃtasaṇuppāḍiyaṃ vasaṇuppāḍiyaṃ jibbhuppāḍiyaṃ olambiyaṃ kareha, ghasiyaṃ kareha, gholiyaṃ kareha, sūlāiyaṃ kareha, sūlabhinnayaṃ kareha, khāravattiyaṃ kareha, vaṇjhavattiyaṃ kareha, sīhapucchiyagaṃ kareha, vasabhapucchiyagaṃ kareha, davaggidaddhayaṅgaṃ kāgaṇimaṃsakkhāviyaṅgaṃ bhattapāṇanirudvagaṃ imaṃ jaṇaṇjīvaṃ vahabandhanaṃ kareha, imaṃ annayarena asubhenaṃ kumāreṇaṃ māreha. Sūyagaḍaṃ,* II. 2 20. Jacobi's tr., *Sūya.*, II. 2.63, *SBE,* xvi, 374-5.

2. Westermann, *op.cit.*p. 17.

3. *Bau. Dh.S.*, I. 10.19. 1 and 2 ; *Āp. Dh. S.*, I. 9.24. 1-4; *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XXII. 14-16.

4. I. 10.19.1.

Āpastamba seems to favour the brāhmaṇa in his place.[1] In any case the amount is not to be paid to the relations of the murdered man. The nature of penances provided for the expiation of the sin of murder also varies according to the varṇa of the murdered person. According to Gautama, for killing a kṣatriya the guilty man should maintain the normal vow of continence for six years, for killing a vaiśya for three years and for killing a śūdra for one year.[2] Vasiṣṭha, however, increases the term of the penance by three years in the case of a vaiśya, and by two years in the cases of a kṣatriya or a śūdra.[3] But the *Sāma-vidhāna Brāhmaṇa*, which is regarded by Burnell a work of this period,[4] provides the same penance for the expiation of the sin of killing the members of the first three varṇas, prescribing a different penance for the sin of killing a śūdra.[5] This may suggest that the first distinction in respect of the wergeld was made between the śūdras and the *traivarṇikas*. Later this was pushed to extremes by prescribing different rates of fine for the murder of the members of the different varnas. There must be some basis for the law of the wergeld, which is found in most of the Dharmasūtras. Different rates of wergeld varying according to class are found not only in later societies but also in the famous code of Hammurabi. But how far and in what ways such a law was observed in the case of the śūdra cannot be determined in the absence of the court decisions on this point.

What is most shocking to the modern democratic mind is the fact that Āpastamba and Baudhāyana provide the same penance for killing a śūdra as for killing a flamingo, a *bhāsa*, a peacock, a brāhmaṇī duck, a *plavalāka*, a crow, an owl, a frog, a muskrat, a dog etc.[6] This extreme view, which attaches the same importance to the life of a śūdra as to that of an animal or a bird, may not have found universal acceptance,[7] for the same lawgivers prescribe

1. I.9.24.1 with Haradatta's comm.
2. XXII. 14-16.
3. XX.31-33.
4. *Sām. Br.*, Introd., p. X.
5. *Sām. Br.*, I.7.5-6.
6. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I.9.25.13; *Bau. Dh. S.*, I.10.19.6.
7. It is interesting to note that the *Sām. Br.*, I.7.7, prescribes almost the same penance for killing a śūdra as for killing a cow.

a weigeld of ten cows and a bull for killing a śūdra.[1] But there is no doubt that the early brāhmanical law attached very little importance to the life of a śūdra.

Thus, with the complete substitution of society based on varṇa for tribal society during post-Vedic times, the members of the śūdra varna ceased to have any place in the work of administration. They were probably excluded from all administrative appointments and subjected to corporal punishments for minor offences. In a way this was natural, for they could not generally afford to pay fines. The penalties laid down by the rules of penances and criminal law in respect of the śūdras are indeed proportionately much higher than those prescribed for offences committed by the higher varṇas. But they at least imply that the śūdra was invested with rights of person and property.[2] He could not be killed with such impunity as a slave in Greece.

In the pre-Mauryan period the social position of the śūdra also underwent a change for the worse. The lawgivers emphasised the old fiction that the śūdra was born from the feet of the god,[3] and apparently on this basis imposed on him numerous social disabilities in matters of company, food, marriage and education, amounting in several cases to his social boycott by the members of the higher varṇas in general and the brāhmaṇas in particular. It was laid down by Baudhāyana that a *snātaka* should not go on a journey with outcastes, a woman or with a śūdra.[4] Haradatta's comment on a passage of Gautama states that the term *snātaka* here means a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya,[5] which implies that the rule did not apply to the vaiśya. Again, one of the rites essential for securing success was that the student desiring it should not talk to women and śūdras.[6] All association with the outcaste (*patita*), who is defined as the son begotten by a śūdra on a female of an unequal caste (evidently higher),[7]

1. *Supra*, p. 109.
2. Ghoshal, *IC*, xiv, 27.
3. *Vas. Dh. S.*, IV. 2. *Bau. Dh. S.*, I.10.19. 5-6.
4. II. 3.6.22.
5. Comm. to IX. 1, *SBE*, ii, 216.
6. *Bau. Dh. S.*, IV. 5.4., cf. *Bhār. Gṛ. S.*, III. 6 ; *Kauśika Sūtra*, III.4.24.
7. *asamānāyām ca śūdrāt patitaṛtvik. Gau. Dh. S.*, IV. 27.

was considered undesirable. These were obviously meant to reduce opportunities of social contact between the śūdra and the higher varnas. In this respect the Dharmasūtras exhibit a clear tendency to widen the social distance between the brāhmaṇa and the śūdra. Āpastamba and Baudhāyana hold that, if a śūdra comes as a guest to a brāhmaṇa, he should be given some work to do and may be fed after the work had been performed.[1] He should not be fed and received by the brāhmaṇa, but by his slaves, who should fetch rice from the royal stores for this purpose.[2] According to Gautama a non-brāhmaṇa should not be the guest of a brāhmaṇa, except on the occasion of a sacrifice,[3] when the vaiśyas and the śūdras should be fed with his servants for mercy's sake.[4] On the occasion of the *Vaiśvadeva* ceremony, however, even the caṇḍālas, dogs and crows should be given a portion, if they came at the end of the rite.[5] It seems that this sacrifice, in which a number of deities were invited to partake of the offerings, retained some of the communal and tribal characteristics, which transcended the new class distinctions.

Gautama lays down that the sūdra should be shown consideration by a young person if he was eighty years old and lived in the same town.[6] This implies that in showing respect to him premium was put on his age and not on his other qualities. In contrast to this it was obligatory on a śūdra to honour an ārya, although the later might be younger in age.[7] Forms of salutation and greeting, which are regulated in the Dharmasūtras according to varṇa, reflect the servile position of the śūdra in society. It is laid down by Āpastamba that a brāhmaṇa should salute by stretching forward his right arm on a level with his ear, a kṣatriya holding it on a level with his breast, a vaiśya

1. *Śūdramabhyāgatam śūdrocedāgatastaṃ karmaṇi nyuñjyāt. Āp. Dh. S.*, II.2.4.19 ; *Bau. Dh. S.*, II.3.5.14.

2. *Āp. Dh. S.*, II.2.4.20. These stores were to be maintained by the king for the brāhmaṇas.

3. V. 43.

4. *anyānbhṛtyaiḥ sahānṛśasaṃārtham.* V. 45.

5. *Āp. Dh. S.*, II.4.9.5 ; *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 3.5.11 ; *Vas. Dh. S.*, XI.9.

6. VI.10.

7. *avarodyāryaṃ śūdreṇa. Ibid.*, VI.11.

holding it on a level with his waist, and a śūdra holding it on a level with his feet.[1] Different terms are prescribed for making enquiries about the welfare and health of the members of the different varnas. Thus the term used for the health of a kṣatriya is '*anāmaya*' and for that of a śūdra is '*ārogya*'.[2] It is further provided that in greeting a kṣatriya or a vaiśya a person should use pronouns and not their names,[3] which implies that only the śūdra could be addressed by his name, the position of the twice-born classes being too high for such familiarity. In the early Pāli texts a kṣatriya is never addressed by his name or in the second person by any person belonging to the lower classes.[4] The mother of king Udaya, whom the barber Gaṅgamāla calls by his family name, shouts angrily ; "This filthy son of a barber, of low origin, forgets himself so much that he calls my son, lord of earth, who is a khattiya by caste, Brahmadatta."[5]

The idea that food touched by the śūdra is defiled and cannot be taken by a brāhmaṇa is first expressed in the Dharmasūtras. According to Āpastamba food touched by an impure brāhmaṇa or a higher caste person becomes impure, but is not unfit for eating.[6] But if it is brought by an impure śūdra, it cannot be taken.[7] The same is the case with the food which is looked at by a dog or an *aṭapātra*, to whose class belong the *patita* and the caṇḍāla.[8] Another rule states that if a śūdra touches a brāhmaṇa while the latter is eating, he should leave off eating because the śūdra's touch defiles him.[9] Āpastamba appears to be more conservative when he says that it is not permissible to take the food offered by a śūdra even if he follows the prescribed laws.[10] But the word *śūdravarjam*, which is taken as prohibiting receiving the food of

1. I.2.5.16.
2. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I.4.14.26-29 ; *Gaut. Dh. S.*, V. 41-42.
3. *sarvanāmnā striyo rājanyavaiśyau ca na nāmnā. Āp. Dh. S.*, I.4 14.23
4. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
5. *Jāt.*, iii, 432.
6. I. 5.16 21.
7. *Ibid.*, I.5.16.22.
8. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I.5.16.30 with Haradatta's comm.
9. *Ibid.*, I. 5.17.1.
10. *sarvavarnānām svadharme vartamānānām bhoktavyam śūdravarjamityeke. Ibid.*, I. 6.18.13.

a śūdra, does not occur in an older manuscript.[1] This shows that such a view did not prevail in the earlier stage, when only the food of an impure śūdra was to be avoided. Nevertheless, the Dharmasūtras unanimously enjoin the brāhmaṇa to shun the food given by a śūdra.[2] A passage of the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*[3] read with the commentary of Haradatta allows him to accept the food of a śūdra in times of distress, provided it is purified by contact with gold and fire and abandoned as soon as the brāhmaṇa gets an alternative source of livelihood.[4] No such condition is attached by Gautama, who, while permitting a brāhmaṇa to accept a śūdra's food in the case of his loss of livelihood,[5] allows him to accept food from a herdsman, a labourer in tillage, an acquaintance of the family, and a servant.[6] But Gautama does not permit him to support himself by following the occupations of a śūdra.[7] Moreover, he is alone in laying down the rule that a snātaka (i.e. a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya according to Haradatta) should not sip the water of a śūdra.[8] In some cases the rules regarding the brāhmaṇa's boycott of the śūdra's food were sought to be enforced by various threats and penances. According to Vasiṣṭha, the most deserving brāhmaṇa was one whose stomach did not contain the food of a śūdra.[9] Such a rule would naturally deprive the guilty brāhmaṇa of the sacrificial gifts, which constituted the main source of his income. It was further declared by the same authority that, if a brāhmaṇa died with the food of a śūdra in his stomach, he would be born either as a village pig or in the family of that śūdra.[10] Further, a brāhmaṇa whose body is nourished by the essence of a śūdra's food may daily recite the Veda, may offer prayers, but cannot find the path that leads upwards. Again, if, after eating the

1. Ms. G U² according to Bühler's classification, *Āp. Dh. S.*, Introd., P. III.
2. *Āp. Dh. S.*, II.8.18.2 ; *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 2.3.1; *Vas.Dh.S.*, XIV. 2-4.
3. *tasyāpi dharmopanatasya*, I. 6.18.14.
4. *Āp.Dh. S.*, I. 6.18.15.
5. *vṛttiścennānareṇa śūdrāt*. XVII. 5.
6. *paśupālakṣetrakarṣakakulasaṃgatakārayitṛparicārakā bhojyānnāḥ*. XVII. 6.
7. VII. 22.
8. IX. 11.
9. VI.26.
10. VI. 27-29.

food of a śūdra, he has conjugal intercourse, even his sons would belong to the śūdra caste and he would not ascend to heaven.[1] Baudhāyana lays down that, if a person commits the offence of eating the food of a śūdra or of cohabiting with a śūdra female, his sin can be expiated by performing seven *prāṇāyāmas* (suppressions of breath) daily for a week.[2] For the same purpose he also provides the penance of performing the ceremony of taking boiled barley grain.[3] These penances, however, should not be taken as representing the state of affairs in this period. The first occurs in the fourth praśna, which according to one view is as late as the 10th century A. D.,[4] and the second occurs in the third praśna, which according to Bühler, is a later addition to the original work.[5]

The Dharmasūtras give the impression that generally the ideal brāhmaṇa avoided the food of a śūdra,[6] especially if he was impure. But the penances and threats for enforcing this ban seem to be of later origin and were probably not effective during this period. It is clear that no such ban was imposed on the kṣatriya and the vaiśya. Thus at the Vaiśvadeva ceremony the śūdra could be engaged in the preparation of the food under the superintendence of the men of the first three varṇas.[7] While cooking he should remain absolutely neat and clean so that the food might not be contaminated. For this purpose he should cause the hair of his head, his beard, the hair on his body and his nails to be cut, preferably on the eighth day of each half of the month or on the days of full and the new moon. Besides he should take his bath with his clothes on.[8] Ordinarily it was provided that the śūdras living in the service

1. *Ibid.*
2. IV.1.5.
3. *Bau.Dh. S.*, III.6.5.
4. Hultzsch, *The Baudhāyanadharmaśāstra*, Introd., p. IX.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The contrast between the brāhmana and the vṛṣala is emphasised in the *Nirukta*, III. 16.
7. *...āryādhiṣṭhitā vā śūdrāḥ saṃskartārah syuḥ. Āp. Dh. S.*, II.2.3.1-4. The passage does not occur in a later ms. (G[1] according to Bühler's classification). Obviously it was removed in later times to exclude the śūdras completely from preparing food.
8. *Ibid.*, II. 2.3.6-8.

of the āryas should trim their hair and nails every month; their mode of sipping water, according to Baudhāyana, being the same as that of the āryas.[1] The fact that a śūdra could be permitted to prepare food even at a religious ceremony, in which the greatest degree of purity was expected, shows that ordinarily his food was accepted by the members of the higher varṇas, perhaps excluding the brāhmaṇa in some cases. Even in a later Jātaka the occupation of a cook is described as one to be practised by slaves or hired labourers.[2] In one case, however, the ksatriya father avoids eating with his daughter by a slave wife. But this passage occurs in the present story of a later Jātaka,[3] and hence may not apply to this period. Prescriptions which forbade contact with food touched by the impure, and especially with the leavings of their table, and punished transgressions of the rules, are found in the early Pāli texts,[4] but there is nothing to show that they were particularly directed against the śūdras. This was probably due to the fact that the old Indo-European practice, according to which all the members of the clan could partake of the common meals provided on special occasions,[5] continued to exercise influence for some time even when tribes and clans had broken up into varṇas.

The marriage rules of the Dharmasūtras were dictated by considerations of varṇa. Of the eight forms of marriage, which first appear during this period, the *gāṇdharva* (love marriage) and the *paiśāca* (marriage by seduction which implied some sort of consent) were considered lawful for the vaiśyas and the śūdras. According to Baudhāyana the first was meant for the vaiśyas and the second for the śūdras.[6] In justification of this view he states that because of their preoccupations with agriculture and service

1. I.5.10.20; this passage is not to be found in the ms. Ct (according to Hultzsch's classification), one of the southern group of the mss. derived from a more original form of the text than the northern (The *Baudhāyanadharmaśāstra*. Introd., p. VIII).
2. *Jāt*, v., 293.
3. *Ibid.*, iv, 145-6.
4. Fick, *SONI*, p. 47.
5. Senart, *Caste in India*, pp. 182-3.
6. I.11.20.13.

the wives of the vaiśyas and the śūdras cannot be kept under control.[1] This suggests that the employment of the womenfolk of the lower orders for earning their livelihood rendered them comparatively independent of their husbands ; the inability of the women of the higher varṇas to earn their living made them more dependent but more respectable in society.

The stability of marriage relations was considered in terms of varṇa. In the opinion of Vasiṣṭha, the higher the varṇa the more stable would be the marriage. Thus it was laid down that, if the husband leaves his home, a wife of the brāhmaṇa or the kṣatriya varṇa, who has issue, shall wait for five years, a wife of the vaiśya varṇa for four years, and one of the śūdra varṇa for three years. If she has no issue, the waiting period will be cut down by one year in the case of the brāhmaṇa, and by two years each in the cases of the kṣatriya, the vaiśya and the śūdra,[2] with the result that in such a case a wife of the śūdra varṇa will have to wait for only one year. Such a rule again implies the comparative independence of the women of the lower orders, among whom marriage ties were easily dissoluble.

But the śūdra women were not treated on a footing of equality by their husbands from the higher varṇas. It is stated by Vasiṣṭha that a śūdra wife, who belongs to the black race, can be espoused as concubine for the sake of pleasure,[3] but cannot be accepted in a regular marriage.[4] A passage from the same source allows an ārya to marry wives from the śūdra caste, if the wedding is not accompanied by the recitation of the proper Vedic texts, but Vasiṣṭha himself does not consider it desirable.[5] For such a marriage causes the degradation of the family and the loss of heaven after death.[6] In the opinion of Āpastamba it is

1. *ayantritakalatrā hi vaiśyaśūdrā bhavanti, karṣaṇaśuśrūṣādhikṛtāt. Bau. Dh S.*, I. 11, 20. 14-15 Buhler's translation that the vaiśyas and śūdras are not particular about their wives does not convey the meaning of the passage accurately (*SBE*, XIV, 207).

2. *Vas. Dh. s.*, XVII 78

3. *kṛṣṇavarṇā ca rāmā ramaṇāyaita na dharmāya. Vas Dh. S.*, XVIII 18 ; *Nir.*, XII. 13.

4. *Ibid.*, cf. Ghoshal, *IC*, XIV, 22.

5. *śūdrāmapyeke mantravarjam tadvat, tathā na kuryāt. Vas. Dh. S* , I. 25-26.

6. *ato hi dhruvaḥ kulāpakarṣaḥ pretya cāsvargah. Vas. Dh. S.*, 1.27. Among the ancient Teutons a free man who wedded a slave was himself reduced to slavery. Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes*, p. 282.

not desirable that a brāhmaṇa should cohabit with a śūdra woman or serve a person of the black race.[1] Both Āpastamba and Baudhāyana provide for purificatory rites for those who have connections with a woman of the śūdra varṇa.[2] But the two passages occuring in the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* are found in the fourth praśna, which, as shown earlier, is a later addition. Therefore such penances need not be seriously taken as applying to this period. The view that the śūdra wife should be avoided comes into conflict with an earlier rule of Vasiṣṭha, which says that a brāhmana can take three wives, a kṣatriya two, and a vaiśya and a śūdra one each, in the order of their varṇas.[3] This clearly allows the members of the first two varṇas to enter into regular marriage relations with śūdra women, and hence the idea that the śūdra wife should be accepted only for the sake of pleasure may have been of later origin. Further, it is obvious that a large number of wives could be maintained only by well-to-do people. Thus while the rule of polygamy for the members of the higher varṇas seems to be in line with their better economic status, the monogamy of the śūdra[4] is in keeping with his unhappy economic situation.

Although marriage with women of lower castes was permissible, the Dharmasūtras show great aversion for connections of the reverse type.[5] According to Gautama a son begotten by a śūdra on a woman of unequal caste was regarded as a *patita*.[6] It is mostly to such marriages and connections that the early law-books trace the origin of about a dozen mixed (*varṇasaṃkara*) castes. Thus the issue begotten by a śūdra on a woman of the kṣatriya varṇa is known as a kṣattṛ, and the one begotten on a female of the vaiśya caste as a māgadha.[7] The son of a śūdra

1. 1.9.27.10-11.

2. *Āp. Dh. S.*, I. 9.26.7, 27-11 ; *Bau. Dh. S.*, IV. 2.13, 6.5-6.

3. *Vas.Dh.S.*, I. 24. Baudhāyana (I. 8. 16. 1-4) allows four wives to the brāhmaṇa, three to the kṣatriya, two to the vaiśya and one to the śūdra.

4. Both Vasiṣṭha and Baudhāyana prescribe only one wife for the śūdra, although the former prescribes this for the vaiśya also.

5. Generally the jātis of this age were endogamous. Fick, *SONI*, p.51.

6. IV. 27.

7. *Bau. Dh. S.*, I. 9. 17. 7.

by a brāhmaṇa woman is branded as a caṇḍāla.[1] According to Gautama people begotten by the brāhmaṇa, the kṣatriya, the vaiśya and the śūdra on a woman of the śūdra caste are respectively known as pāraśavas, yavanas, karaṇas and śūdras.[2] The son of a brāhmana by a śūdra woman is called a niṣāda.[3] His issue by a female of the śūdra caste is known as the pulkasa, and the son begotten by a śūdra on a female of the niṣāda caste is known as a kukkuṭaka.[4] The issue of the union of a kṣatriya and a śūdra woman is known as an ugra,[5] while that of a vaiśya and a śūdra is to be regarded as a rathakāra.[6] The above list of castes would show that in the opinion of the Dharmasūtras anuloma (in regular order) and pratiloma (inverted order) connections between the śūdra and members of the higher varṇas were regarded as the most plentiful source of the origin of the mixed castes, many of whom were relegated to the position of untouchables. But most of these mixed castes were nothing more than backward tribes, who were annexed to the four original and recognised varṇas by giving them a wholly arbitrary genesis.[7] Nevertheless, in course of time such explanations may have influenced new formations of castes, for these have taken place even in recent times.[8]

Although the early Gṛhyasūtras nowhere clearly refer to the exclusion of the śūdra from the rite of initiation, the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* states that he cannot be admitted to the *upanayana* and the study of the Veda.[9] The presence of a śūdra, and particularly that of a caṇḍāla, is considered a sufficient ground for stopping the recitation of the Veda.[10] Under such conditions

1. *Ibid., Vas. Dh. S*, XVIII. 1.
2. IV. 21 ; cf. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 2.3.30.
3. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 2.3.29; *Gaut. Dh. S.*, IV. 16 ; *Vas. Dh.S.*, XVIII. 8.
4. *Bau.Dh.S.*, I. 9.17. 13-14.
5. *Ibid.*, I. 9 17.5.
6. *Ibid*, I. 9.17.6.
7. Fick, *SONI*, p. 9.
8. There are several tribes of this type in Chotānāgpur, and some castes of this type in eastern Nepāl.
9. *aśūdrānām aduṣṭakarmaṇāmupāyanaṃ vedādhyayanamagnyādheyaṃ phalavanti ca karmāṇi.* I.1.1.6.
10. *Ibid.*, I. 3.9.9; *Śānkh. Gṛ. S.*, IV. 7.33.

Baudhāyana and Gautama prefer the interruption of all studies.[1] The latter further adds that the study should not be always carried on in the same town.[2] This has been interpreted by Maskarin to mean a town which is inhabited mainly by śūdras.[3] Gautama alone states that, if a śūdra recites the Vedic texts, his tongue should be cut out ; and if he remembers them, his body should be split in twain.[4] This terrible measure seems to reflect the extremist attitude of Manu,[5] and hence may be treated as an interpolation in the law-book of Gautama. Nevertheless, it is evident that even during this period the idea of imparting Vedic education to a śūdra was vehemently opposed.

A passage from Āpastamba, however, favours the education of the śūdra in Vedic literature. While stating that a student should pay the fee to the teacher for the teaching of the Veda, he declares that the later can accept it either from an ugra or a śūdra, under all circumstances.[6] This may indicate an earlier state of things, when the śūdra was admitted to Vedic education. But later on this was denied to him, not only by Gautama and Vasiṣṭha but also by Āpastamba himself. The Veda being the source of the law (dharma), as a natural corollary Vasiṣṭha declares that a śūdra is not worthy of receiving any advice or the contents of law.[7] Apparently such a dictum was meant to keep the śūdras in complete ignorance of the law by which they were governed.

Āpastamba provides that women and śūdras may learn a supplement to the *Atharva Veda*.[8] It is suggested that this comprises dancing, music and other branches of everyday art and learning.[9] In commenting on a passage of Gautama Maskarin refers to a

1. *Bau.Dh.S*, I. 11.21 15 ; *Gaut.Dh.S.*, XVI. 19.
2. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XVI. 46.
3. *tatra Śūdrādibhūyiṣṭhe anadhyāyaḥ.*
4. *udāharaṇe jihvāccchedaḥ, dhāraṇe śarīrabhedaḥ.* XII. 4-6.
5. VIII. 270-272.
6. .... *sarvadā Śūdrata ugrato vācāryārthasyāharaṇaṃ dhārmyamityeke. Āp. Dh. S.*, I. 2.7.19-21.
7. *na śūdrāya matiṃ dadyāt...na cāsyopadiśeddharmam. Vas.Dh.S.*, XVIII. 14.
8. *Āp Dh S.*, II. 11.29. 11-12 with the comm. of Haradatta.
9. *SBE*, ii 169.

similar type of education. He quotes the Smṛtis as stating that a niṣāda should be initiated and educated in the art of elephant training.[1] All this may imply that the śūdras could receive training in arts and crafts but were debarred from receiving Vedic education, which was more or less identical with literate learning. Thus the Dharmasūtras sought to establish a divorce between literate education, which was confined to the members of the twice-born varṇas, and technical training, which lay in the sphere of the śūdras. It was also stated that Vedic study impedes pursuit of agriculture and *vice versa*.[2] Such a rule would naturally affect not only the śūdras but also those vaiśyas who carried on agriculture themselves. We do not know how far this policy worked in practice. A later Jātaka informs us that two caṇḍāla boys went in disguise to receive education at Taxila, but, when they were detected through the inadvertant use of their own dialect, they were expelled from the institution.[3] Nevertheless, other Jātaka stories show that the schools had on their rolls sons of merchants and tailors,[4] and even fisherman.[5] Thus in practice even during this period the śūdras were not completely excluded from receiving education.

The Dharmasūtra's exclusion of the śūdra from Vedic education naturally led to his exclusion from sacrifices and sacraments, which could be performed only wih the Vedic mantras. A rule of the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[6] is interpreted as suggesting that the śūdra could hear the Vedic mantras to be recited on the occasion of the *madhuparka* ceremony.[7] Similarly Jaimini quotes an old teacher Bādari as stating that the Vedic sacrifice can be performed by members of all the four varṇas.[8] But he does not approve of this idea,[9] and thus seems to represent

1. *Gaut Dh.S.*, IV. 26.
2. *vedaḥ kṛṣivināśāya kṛṣi vedavināśinī. Bau.Dh.S.*, I. 5.10.30.
3. *Jāt.* iv, 391-2.
4. *Ibid.*, iv, 38.
5. *Ibid.*, iii, 171.
6. I. 21. 12 (Trivandrum edn.); I 24 12-15 (*SBE tr.*).
7. Hopkins, *Mutual Relations of the Four Castes in Manu*, p. 86, fn.1.
8. *Jai. Mī. S.*, VI. 1.25-27.
9. *Ibid.*, VI. 1. 33f.

the dominant view of his age. The śūdra could not lay the sacred fire for the Vedic sacrifice.[1] He could not perform any sacrament.[2] He came to be excluded from the Vedic sacrifice to such an extent that in the performance of certain rites even his presence and sight were to be avoided.[3] Ordinarily a śūdra could not use even the current exclamation *namaḥ*,[4] he could do this only if he was especially permitted to do so.[5] Gautama, however, quotes certain authorities who allow a śūdra to perform a select list of small Vedic sacrifices known as the *pāka-yajñas* (simple domestic rites).[6] Baudhāyana quotes others as stating that submersion in water and bathing are prescribed for all the varṇas, but sprinkling water over the body along with the recitation of the mantras is the particular duty of the twice-born.[7]

It is argued that the non-performance of various ceremonies and sacrifices were an advantage to the śūdra, who was free from the obligation of observing them.[8] But what was an advantage to him from the modern point of view was a disadvantage according to the dominant social outlook of those times, which condemned those who did not perform sacrifices to a low social status.[9]

Gautama lays down that a śūdra shall live with his wife.[10] Haradatta quotes another commentator as interpreting this to the effect that a śūdra can only lead the life of the householder and not that of the student, the hermit or the ascetic.[11] It seems that in later times a brāhmaṇa, as a rule, passed through four, a nobleman through three, a citizen through two, and a śūdra through one of the āśramas.[12] This may not have always been the case, but the discrimination against the śūdra is consistent

1. *Āp Dh. S.*, I. 1.1.6.
2. *śūdramityasaṃskāryo vijñāyate. Vas.Dh.S.*, IV. 3.
3. *Pāraskara Gṛ. S.*, II. 8.3.
4. *Gaut.Dh.S.*, X. 64.
5. *Ibid.*
6. X. 65.
7. II. 4. 7. 3.
8. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
9. Dutt implicity recognises this fact on pp. 177-8 of his book.
10. X. 55.
11. *nā' śramāntarā prāptiriti.* Comm. to *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 55.
12. Max Müller, *The Hibbert Lectures.* p. 343.

with his function of service to the members of the upper varṇas, a task which he could only perform as a householder.

The śūdra was, however, permitted to offer funeral oblations.[1] But Gautama and Vasiṣṭha provide that the impurity caused to him by birth or death of a kinsman (sapiṇḍa) shall last for a month.[2] According to Vasiṣṭha this period lasts for ten, fifteen and twenty days respectively in the case of a brāhmaṇa, a rājanya and a vaiśya.[3] Gautama, however, cuts down the period by four days in the case of a kṣatriya and eight days in that of a vaiśya.[4] The longest period of impurity in the case of a śūdra, if observed, must have caused great hardship to him. Unable to earn his living, he would be compelled to throw himself at the mercy of a creditor or his master. Even in recent times, in the period of impurity caused by death, poor śūdras have been seen begging from door to door. But in one respect the śūdra's position was better. He was not considered so impure as to be forbidden to touch the corpse of the higher varṇas. He could carry the corpse even of a brāhmaṇa[5] to the cremation ground, where he could touch the funeral pyre.[6]

Of the three higher varṇas, the brāhmaṇa was expected to carry out his religious duties most scrupulously. Thus Baudhāyana lays down that a brāhmaṇa who does not perform the *saṃdhyā* morning and evening should be made by the king to do the work of a śūdra.[7] The brāhmaṇa also fell from status if he took to manual occupations. Baudhāyana states that the brāhmaṇas who tend cattle, live by trade, work as artisans, actors, servants or usurers should be treated like śūdras.[8] Gautama goes a step further and states that, if an ārya adopts the occupations of a non-ārya, (i.e. a śūdra), he is reduced to

1. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, X. 53
2. *Ibid.*, XIV, 2-4; *Vas. Dh. S.*, IV. 30.
3. *Vas. Dh. S.*, IV 27-29.
4. XIV 2-4 According to others the period of impurity in the case of a vaiśya may last for half a month (*Ibid*).
5. R. L. Mitra, *Indo-Aryans*. ii, 131-2.
6. *Āśva. Gr. S.* (*SBE* tr.), IV. 2 19-21. The word used here is '*vṛṣala*'.
7. *Bau. Dh. S.*, II. 4 7 15.
8. *Ibid*, I 5.10.24; cf *Vas. Dh. S*, II. 27.

his status.[1] Commenting on this passage, Haradatta thinks that even a brāhmaṇa who performs the occupation of a non-ārya need not be served by a śūdra. He curiously adds that a śūdra who does the work of an ārya must not be despised by others following non-āryan occupations. Evidently there seems to be no point in such a contempt, for the āryas were higher in status. Such rules suggest that the members of the higher varṇas, especially the brāhmaṇas, felt contempt for manual occupations, which reduced them to the position of śūdras when they were forced to earn their living with their hands.[2] In the *Vinaya Piṭaka* agriculture, trade and tending of cattle are regarded as a high type of work.[3] This obviously refers to the functions of the vaiśya. On the other hand the work of a carpenter and a sweeper is regarded as of low type.[4] The same text enumerates five low occupations (*hīnasippāni*) of the nalakāra (bamboo worker), the kumbhakāra (potter), the pesakāra (weaver), the chammakāra (leather worker) and the nahāpita (barber).[5] At one place, however, the occupations of the weaver, the bamboo worker, the potter and the barber are put in the list of ordinary crafts,[6] which shows that generally the fifth craft, that of the leather worker, was universally looked upon with contempt.

Taking the social status of these crafts separately, the potter does not generally appear in dark colours.[7] But at one place the work of the weaver (tantavāya) is described as of inferior type.[8] The barber also seems to have been an object of derision.[9] Thus although the barber Upāli became a monk, he was reviled by the nuns as one of low birth whose occupations are shampooing and cleaning of dirt.[10] All this indicates a tendency to hold

1. *āryānāryayorvyatikṣepe karmaṇaḥ sāmyam*. X. 67.
2. In the Jātakas there are instances of brāhmaṇas living by manual occupations.
3. *Vin.*, iv, 6.
4. *Ibid* The term *koṭṭhakakammam* is explained as *tacchakakamma* in the *Vin. A.*, p. 439 ; but Horner translates it as work of a store-(room)keeper *SBB*, xi, 175.
5. *Vin.*, iv, 7.
6. *Digha. N*, i, 51.
7. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 460.
8. *lāmaka-kamma. Jāt.*, i. 356.
9. *Jāt.*, iii, 452-3.
10. *kasavato malamaṭṭano nihīnajacco. Vin.*, iv, 308.

some crafts in low esteem. Since these crafts were practised by various sections of the śūdras, in course of time the occupations of the śūdra varṇa as a whole came to be stigmatized. This is evident from a passage of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, which uses the phrase "*luddācāra khuddācāra ti*"[1] in defining the functions of the śūdras. This means that the śūdras are those who live on hunting and other humble pursuits. In a Jain text also the terms *viṣala*, *gṛhadāsa* (born slave) and 'low born wretch' are used as terms of contempt like dog, thief, robber, cheat, liar etc.[2]

The early Pāli texts often mention the five despised-castes of the caṇḍāla, the nesāda, the vena, the rathakāra and the pukkusa.[3] They are described as having low families (*nīca kula*)[4] or inferior births (*hīnajāti*).[5] The enumeration of low trades, crafts and castes seems to be broadly true of pre-Mauryan times, for the Buddha argues at length with the monks that they should not create such distinctions in the order by insulting speech referring to the former *jāti*, the *sippa*, the *kamma* etc. of the monks.[6]

Several despised *jātis* of the Buddhist texts roughly correspond to the untouchable sections of brāhmaṇical society. According to the Buddhist and Jain texts the caṇḍālas and the pukkusas were not included in the śūdra varṇa.[7] But the Dharmasūtras incorporate them in the list of the mixed castes, who are supposed to have śūdra blood. According to Patañjali Pāṇini seems to have included the caṇḍāla and the mṛtapa (a person who watches dead bodies) in the list of those śūdras who lived outside towns and villages, and whose contact permanently defiled the bronze vases of brāhmaṇas.[8]

Originally the caṇḍālas seem to have been an aboriginal tribe. This is clear from their use of their own dialect.[9] In

1. *Dīgha N.*, iii, 95.
2. *Āyār.*, II. 4.1.8; cf. *Dīgha N.*, i. 92-3.
3. *Majj. N.*, iii, 169-78; ii, 152, 183-4.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Vin.*, ii, 6; cf. *Aṅg. N.*, ii, 85; *Saṃy. N.*, i, 93.
6. *Vin.*, iv, 4-11.
7. *Saṃy. N.* i, 102, 166; *Śūya.*, 1.9.2-3; Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-30.
8. *śūdrānāmanirvasitānām. Pā.*, II. 4-10; *Mahābhāṣya*, i, 475.
9. *Jāt.*, iv, 391-2.

a Jain text they are mentioned along with the other tribes such as the Śabaras, the Draviḍas, the Kaliṅgas, the Gauḍas and the Gāndhāras.[1] But gradually the caṇḍālas came to be looked upon as untouchables. Āpastamba holds that to touch and see a caṇḍāla is sinful.[2] This passage, however, it not to be found in the two earlier manuscripts of his Dharmasūtra,[3] which shows that untouchability appeared probably towards the end of the pre-Mauryan period. A similar provision occurs in the later work of Gautama, who provides that, if a caṇḍāla defiles the body, it can be purified by bathing dressed in clothes.[4]

In the Pāḷi texts the caṇḍālas are clearly depicted as untouchables. A later Jātaka describes the caṇḍālas as the meanest men on earth.[5] Contact with the air that touched a caṇḍāla's body was regarded as pollution.[6] The very sight of a caṇḍāla forboded evil.[7] Thus the daughter of a setṭhi of Banaras, seeing a caṇḍāla, washes her eyes, that have been contaminated by a mere glance at that despised person.[8] Food and drink, if seen by him, were not to be taken.[9] Partaking of his food, even without knowledge, led to social ostracism. It is said that sixteen thousand brāhmaṇas lost their caste because they unknowingly took food which had been polluted by contact with the leavings of a caṇḍāla's meal.[10] There is also the case of a brāhmaṇa, who ate the table leavings of a caṇḍāla from hunger, and committed suicide in order to avoid the contempt of his former caste people.[11] In a Jātaka story when a caṇḍāla enters a town, the people beat him and render him senseless.[12] A similar story recurs in a Jain text of later times. It is said that when two sons of a mātaṅga leader of Banaras led a singing and dancing party

1 *Sūyagadam* (*SBE* tr.), II. 2 27.
2. *Āp. Dh. S*, II. 1. 2 8.
3. MSS. Gu 2, 3 according to Bühler's classification (*op. cit.*, Introd., p. III.)
4 XIV 30.
5. *Jāt*, iv, 397.
6. *Ibid.*, iii, 233.
7. *Ibid*, iv, 376, 390-1.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, iv, 390.
10. *Ibid.*, iv, 387.
11. *Ibid*, ii, 82-84.
12 *Ibid.*, iv, 376, 391.

during the festival of a god of love, the high caste people belaboured them with kicks and blows and turned them out of the town.[1] By and large, the Jātaka references suggest that although the caṇḍālas were despised as untouchables by the members of the higher varṇas, they were especially hated by the brāhmaṛas.

When the caṇḍālas were absorbed in brāhmaṛical society, probably on account of their being hunters and fowlers, they were assigned the task of removing dead bodies of animals and human beings. They always appear to be associated with the removal and cremation[2] of corpses.[3] This work was also done by the paṇas, who were known as caṇḍālas.[4] The caṇḍālas were also sometimes engaged for street sweeping.[5] The caṇḍāla does not appear as an executioner of criminals in the Dhaṛmasūtras. In the Jātaka he is employed in whipping and cutting off the limbs of the criminal.[6] It has been suggested that the *coraghātaka* (executioner of a thief) of the Jātaka may have been a caṇḍāla.[7] Some of the caṇḍālas earned their living by the occupations of jugglers and acrobats,[8]—a practice which is still followed by the backward nomadic people wandering from place to place in Northern India.

The caṇḍāla led a life of misery and squalor. A simile from a Pāli text informs us that a caṇḍāla boy or girl, clad in rags, with begging tray in hand, on entering village or town assumes a humble mein and then goes on.[9] We learn from a later Jātaka that the caṇḍāla possessed a pair of coloured garments (in order to distinguish him from the rest of the population), a girdle, a ragged robe and an earthen bowl.[10]

1. *Uttarā. Ṭīkā*, 13, f. 185a quoted in Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
2. *Rām.*, I. 58. 10.
3. *chavachaḍḍaka-caṇḍālā*. Comm. to *Jāt.*, iii, 195.
4. *Antaga.*, 65.
5. *Jāt.*, iv, 390.
6. *Ibid.*, iii, 41, 179.
7. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 458.
8. *Ibid.*, 439-440.
9. *...kalopihattho nantikavāsī gāmaṃ vā nigamaṃ vā pavisanto nīcacittena yathā uṭṭhahitvā pavisati. Ang. N.*, iv, 376.
10. *Jāt.*, iv, 379.

In popular parlance the term caṇḍāla signified a person who was without any virtues, a person without faith and morals.[1] Fick rightly says that in their depiction of the caṇḍāla the Jātakas show that the reality was not far different from the priestly theory.[2] But it is important to note that most of the references relating to the caṇḍālas are found in the later Jātakas, especially in the fourth volume, and hence may apply to the end of the pre-Mauryan period or even to later times.

The pukkasas or the pukkusas seem to have been an aboriginal tribe that lived by hunting,[3] but they were gradually absorbed in brāhmaṇical society for certain tasks such as removing flowers from the temple and the palace.[4] The fact that they could approach the temple premises to remove flowers shows that they were not regarded as being quite as degraded as the caṇḍāla.

The veṇas were another aboriginal tribe who lived by hunting and working in bamboo.[5] A later Jātaka mentions a veṇukāra or velukāra who goes into the forest with his knife to collect a bundle of bamboos for his trade.[6] The Dharmasūtras invent an origin for the veṇas as well. According to Baudhāyana a vaiṇa is the offspring of a vaidehaka father (born of a vaiśya father and a kṣatriya mother) and an ambaṣṭha mother (born of a brāhmaṇa and a vaiśya mother).[7] Thus, unlike the caṇḍāla and the pulkasa, the vaiṇa was not supposed to have śūdra blood. Although in a later Jātaka verse the term *veṇī* is bracketted with the caṇḍāla as a term of rebuke,[8] there is nothing to show that the veṇas were regarded as untouchables like the caṇḍālas. The commentary to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* clearly states that birth as a veṇa means birth as a carpenter (tacchaka).[9] The veṇa and the takṣaka being identical, it appears strange that the latter,

1. *Aṅg. N.*, iii, 206.
2. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
3. There is no indication of this in the Pāli texts, but Manu (X. 49) and Viṣṇu (XVI. 9) prescribe hunting as their occupation.
4. *Jāt.*, iii, 195; cf. Fick, *op. cit.* p. 321.
5. Bose *op. cit.*, ii, 454-5.
6. *Jāt.*, iv, 251.
7. *Bau. Dh. S.*, 1.9.17.12.
8. *Jāt.*, v, 306.
9. *veṇajāti ti tacchakajāti. SBB*, xi, 173; cf. *Jāt.*, v, 306.

who enjoyed a high status in later Vedic society, was relegated to the position of a despised caste in the Buddhist texts.

The rathakāra is also regarded as a despised caste in the Buddhist texts, but in the brāhmaṇical texts he continues to enjoy a high social standing. The Gṛhyasūtras provide for his *upanayana*.[1] Rhys Davids suggests that the rathakāras were an aboriginal tribe.[2] But this does not seem to be correct, because they formed part of the āryan viś in Vedic times. It is likely, however, that in later times some of the aborigines were assimilated to the ranks of the rathakāras. On the basis of a passage from a later Jātaka[3] it is suggested that the rathakāra fell in status because of his having taken to leather work.[4] But the rathakāra also continued to be employed to make the wheels of the chariot, which was used by the kings.[5] Further, although the craft of the leather worker (cammakāra) is regarded as low, he himself is not put in the list of the despised castes. Perhaps one of the reasons why the rathakāra is treated as a condemned caste in the Buddhist texts is the Buddhist aversion to war, for which the rathakāra prepared chariots. In any case it is clear that they were not degraded to the same level as the caṇḍāla and the pukkusa.

It is not so difficult to explain the inclusion of the nesādas in the Buddhist list of despised castes. This agrees with their low position in the Dharmasūtras. They were a pre-āryan tribal people, who are described as short-limbed, of the complexion of charred wood, with blood-red eyes,[6] high cheekbones, low-topped nose, and copper-coloured hair.[7] The tradition of their curious origin from the body of Veṇa,[8] the king who proved tyrannical to the priestly class, may indicate the resistance

1. *vasante brāhmaṇamupanīta...varṣāṃ rathakāraṃ śiśire vā. Bhāradvāja Gṛ. S.*, I. 1 ; *Ban. Gṛ S.*, II.5.6. cf. II. 8.5 ; cf. *Jai. Mī. S.*, VI.1.50.
2. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, i, 100.
3. *Jāt.*, vi, 51 ; cf. *Peta VA*, III.1.13.
4. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 456.
5. *Aṅg. N*, i, 111-113.
6. *Mbh.*, XII. 59. 102-3.
7. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
8. *Mbh.*, XII. 59.99-101. B. C. Law argues that these were Niṣādhas, and not Niṣādas (*Tribes in Ancient India*, p. 100), but the Cr. Edn. of the *Mbh.* clearly mentions *Niṣādas*.

they offered to the process of brāhmaṇization. Even when adopted into brāhmaṇical society, the niṣādas continued mainly as hunters,[1] who lived in their own villages.[2] Possibly some of the niṣādas found their way into the priestly class. The niṣāda gotra reported by the *gaṇapāṭha* of Pāṇini,[3] though not mentioned in any of the standard gotra lists, would not be possible unless some brāhmaṇas had been adopted from aboriginal priests or had served the aborigines as priests.[4] All the same, it is clear that during this period the niṣādas definitely fell from the status which they enjoyed in later Vedic society.

At least some of the despised castes of the Pāli texts, particularly the niṣādas and the caṇḍālas, were treated as untouchables. Collectively the untouchables were known as the *antyas* or the *bāhyas*, i. e. people living outside villages and towns. Gautama condemns an *antya* as the vilest person[5] (*pāpiṣṭhaḥ*). Vasiṣṭha distinguishes between the good śūdras and the *antyayonis*, who can appear as witnesses only in their own cases.[6] In the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* the word *antaḥ* is used in relation to the caṇḍālas and shows that he lived at the end of the village.[7] In the same text the *bāhyas*, among whom the recitation of the Veda is forbidden, are explained by Haradatta as the ugras and the niṣādas.[8] The *antāvasāyins* are described by Vasiṣṭha as a caste begotten by a śūdra on a vaiśya woman.[9] It is said that a brāhmaṇa father who dwells with the *antāvasāyins* or cohabits with one of their women should be rejected.[10] Generally the untouchables lived at the end of villages or towns or in their own settlements. Their segregation was not the result of any deliberate policy of expulsion from old āryan settlements. It seems

1. *Jāt.*, ii, 200 ; vi, 71 f., 170.
2. *Ibid.*, vi, 71f.
3. IV. 1.100.
4. Kosambi, *JAOS*, lxxv,44. This depends on the assumption that the niṣāda gotra was a brāhmaṇical gotra, which is doubtful.
5. IV. 28. At another place Gautama states that the *antyas* should be given impure garments (XIV. 42).
6. XVI. 30.
7. I.3.9.15.
8. I.3.9.18.
9. XVIII.3.
10. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XX.1 ; cf. XXIII, 32.

rather that the whole population of tribal villages were condemned to the position of untouchables by the brāhmaṇas.

It is not possible to accept the explanation of the origin of untouchability as given in the Dharmasūtras, which attribute it to the intermixture of castes. It has been suggested that in the majority of instances the origin of untouchables took place as a result of complete isolation and loss of tradition of the Buddhist communities.[1] But such a view is untenable, for this social phenomenon appears in the pre-Mauryan period, which witnessed the rise and growth of Buddhism. It has been contended that those who continued beef-eating were condemned as untouchables.[2] This may have swelled the ranks of the untouchables in later times, but cannot be taken as an explanation of their origin, for except for a late reference in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*,[3] there is nothing which may imply that beef-eating was prohibited in brāhmaṇical society during this period. It is also argued that the spirit of contempt leading to untouchability "was evidently not a part of the original Indo-Aryan institutions, but was a thing borrowed from the Dravidians, among whom in the south even in modern times untouchability plays such a prominent part."[4] But there is no evidence that untouchability prevailed in the south among the Dravidians before their brāhmaṇization. On the contrary, Baudhāyana, a lawgiver from the south, and Āpastamba, who is also sometimes associated with that region, maintain a less conservative attitude towards the śūdras in matters of food and company than the two other authors of the Dharmasūtras from the north. Besides, it has been shown earlier how certain crafts and occupations were held in ill repute by the members of the upper varṇas, who claimed to be āryas. Finally, the idea of untouchability has been traced to the theoretical impurity of certain occupations.[5]

1. *MR* (Dec. 1923), 712-13. This view has been further developed by Ambedkar. *The Untouchables*, Ch. IX.

2. Ambedkar, *The Untouchables*, Ch. X.

3. XXII. 13, declares cow-killing as a minor sin which has to be expiated by a penance.

4. Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7, cf. p. 31.

5. Ghurye, *Caste and Class*, p. 159.

But the vital question is why certain occupations should be regarded as impure.

One of the reasons for the origin of untouchability was the cultural lag of the aboriginal tribes, who were mainly hunters and fowlers, in contrast to the members of the brāhmaṇical society, who possessed the knowledge of metals and agriculture,[1] and were developing urban life. The low material culture and the consequent wretched condition of these tribes is described in the Buddhist texts in these words : "A fool, should he become a human being after the lapse of a very long time, comes into one of the low stocks — caṇḍālas, nesādas, veṇas, rathakāras and pukkusas, he is reborn to a life of vagrancy, want and penury, scarcely getting food and drink for his stomach or clothes to his back..."[2] This would suggest that these despised castes had a very precarious living, and were in far worse conditions than those śūdras who were employed as dāsas and kammakaras, and as such enjoyed some security of livelihood. This contrast in material life was accentuated by the spirit of contempt growing in brāhmaṇical society itself. As in the case of contemporary Greek society,[3] there had appeared in post-Vedic society a spirit of contempt for manual works and occupations. Gradually as the upper varṇas, especially of the brāhmaṇas and the kṣatriyas, withdrew more and more from the work of primary production and tended to be hereditary in their positions and functions, they not only developed a contempt for manual work but also extended it to the hands that practised it.

Against the background of a very low material culture of the aborigines, the increasing contempt for manual work, combined with primitive ideas of taboo and impurtity associated with certain materials, produced the unique social phenomenon of untouchability. This was particularly true of the work of the caṇḍālas who dealt with corpses, with which were linked primitive ideas of impurity and horror. Consequently it was felt necessary

1. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

2. *...na lābhī annassa pānassa vatthassa yānassa...Majj. N.*, iii, 169-70; Aṅg., ii, 85.

3. *Past and Present.* No. 6, 5.

to avoid contact with such persons. In later times the idea of untouchability was extended not only to the niṣādas and pulkusas but also to craftsmen such as the leather workers and the weavers. For during this period although the crafts of the carmakāras and pesakāras were considered contemptible, they themselves were not regarded as untouchables.

We may finally consider how far the religious reforming movements of this period affected the position of the śūdras. So far as religious emancipation is concerned, Buddhism opened its door not only to the members of the four varṇas, who could be admitted to the Saṃgha and become ascetics,[1] but even to the caṇḍālas and the pukkusas, who could attain the bliss of the *nirvāṇa*.[2] When the robber Aṅgulimāla is admitted to the Buddhist Order, he exclaims : "Verily I have obtained an āryan birth".[3] This would show that the Buddhist admission of the śūdras to their church was as good as restoring to them the old tribal right of initiation, of which they were dispossessed by brāhmaṇical society. But while the tribal initiation prepared the people for the practical life of this world, this prepared them for the spiritual emancipation from the miseries of life.[4]

Buddhism made no distinction in the imparting of knowledge. The Buddha argues that just as the king or the owner of the royal domain should not appropriate all revenues to himself, so also a brāhmana or a śramaṇa should not monopolise all knowledge to himself.[5] In the Buddhist view anybody could be a teacher irrespective of his caste. It is said that a teacher is always to be respected, be he a sudda, a caṇḍāla or a pukkusa.[6] It is typical of the Buddhist attitude that in a Jātaka story a brāhmaṇa loses the charm learnt from a caṇḍāla because of denying his teacher out of shame.[7] In another case the caṇḍāla, who is the Bodhisatta, kicks a fellow brāhmaṇa pupil,

1. *Majj. N.*, i, 211, ii, 182-84 ; *Saṃy N.*, i, 99 ; *Vin.*, ii, 239 ; *Aṅg. N.*, iv, 202 ; cf *Majj. N.*, iii, 60 ; i, 384 ; *Dīgha N*, iii, 80-58.
2. *Jāt*, iii, 194 ; iv, 303.
3. *ariyāya jātiyā jāto. Majj. N.*, ii, 103
4. Cf. Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, ii, 238.
5. *Dīgha N.*, i, 226-30.
6. *Jāt.*, iv, 200ff.
7. *Ibid.*

who is defeated in an academic dispute, but the action is condemned by the teacher.[1]

Early Jainism also admitted to its monastic order members of all the varṇas, and tried to uplift the caṇḍālas. Thus a later Jain source refers to the case of a king who occupied a lower seat in learning spells from a mātaṅga.[2] The *Uttarādhyayana* informs us that Harisena, a sovāga (i.e. caṇḍāla) by birth, visited the sacrificial enclosure of a brāhmaṇa teacher and lectured to him on the value of penance, good life, right exertion, self- control, tranquility and celibacy.[3]

Unlike the brāhmaṇas, the early Jain monks accepted food from lower class families, including those of the weavers.[4] Similarly a Buddhist monk or nun could approach families of all the four varṇas for a meal, or could eat at their houses when invited by them.[5] But we do not know whether the lay devotees of these religions followed their teachers in this respect.

That the members of the lower orders actually got into the Buddhist church is suggested by a number of instances. Mātaṅga, the son of a caṇḍāla, is said to have attained infinite bliss, which many kṣatriyas and brāhmaṇas could not attain ;[6] a monk is described as a former vulture-trainer,[7] and caṇḍālas appear as adopting the homeless state although Fick thinks that "the acutal existence of such holy men is extremely doubtful".[8] He gives no good reason however for his lack of faith in the statement of the Pāli canon on this point. In the list of the authors of the *Thera* — and *Therigāthas*, at least ten among 259 theras[9] and eight out of about fifty-nine therīs[10] belonged to sections of society which may be regarded as śūdras. They included an actor, a caṇḍāla, a basketmaker, a trapper, a prostitute and a female

1. *Jāt.*, iii, 233.
2. *Dasa. Cu.*, p. 45 quoted in Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
3. *Uttarā.*, XII ff.
4. *Āyār.*, II.1 2.2
5. *Vin.*, iii, 184-5 ; iv, 80, 177.
6. *Sut. Nipā*, 137 and 138.
7. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, i, 174.
8. Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
9. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 285 fn. 1.
10. Calculated on the basis of the list given in Law, *HPL*, ii, 308-16.

slave.[1] We have no similar information to throw light on the proportion of the members of the lower orders in the Jain church. But it is significant that the first female disciple of Mahāvīra is said to have been a captured slave.[2] It is suggested that the homeless condition was often a reaction from surfeit of wealth and power which the people of the lower orders were totally denied.[3] But this is hardly borne out by evidence either in the case of the Buddhist or the Jain church. According to a Jain canon some of the causes of the renunciation of the world were poverty, sickness, sudden anger and insult.[4] There might be some truth in the following abuse hurled by the householders at the monks: "those who become śramaṇas are the meanest workmen, men unable to support their families, low-caste men, wretches, idlers."[5] In order to discourage the influx of such people, it was said that a miserable man who becomes a monk in order to get food from others will be reborn as a boar greedy of wild rice.[6] A Buddhist text informs us that in the realm of Bimbisāra the Saṃgha enjoyed special protection from the king, on account of which at times prisoners, thieves, persons condemned to the punishment of whipping, debtors and runaway slaves took refuge in the Buddhist Order and got themselves ordained.[7] When these cases were brought to the notice of the Buddha, he laid down that such people should not be admitted into the Order. A passage of the *Dīgha Nikāya* also makes it clear that members of the lower orders sought an end of their misery by becoming Buddhist monks. In the *Sāmaññā-phala sutta* Ajātaśatru of Magadha, after pointing out the advantages derived by mahouts, horsemen, home-born slaves, cooks, barbers, bath attendants, confectioners, garland-makers, washermen, weavers, basket-makers and potters from their occupations,[8] enquires of the Bud-

1. *Ibid*, ii, 501-508; 508-516.
2. Jain, *Life as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 107.
3. Bose, *op. cit.* ii, 485.
4. *parijunā, raginttiā, rosā* and *anāḍhitā pavvajjā. Ṭhāṇāṅga*, X. 712.
5. *Sūyagaḍam*, II. 2.54.
6. *Ibid.*, I. 7. 25.
7. *...kārabhedako coro...coro...kasāhato kataḍaṇḍakammo.....iṇāyiko...dāso...* In every case it is said: *palāyitā bhikkhūsu pabbajito hoti. Vin.*, i, 74-76.
8. *...hatthārohā assārohā...dāsakaputtā ājārikā kappakā nahāpakā sūdā mālākārā rajakā pesakārā...Dīgha. N.*, i, 51.

dha whether the members of the Order, who have given up the world, derive any corresponding advantages visible in this life from their own profession. In his reply the Buddha lays bare the contrast between the luxurious and full life of the king, who is in possession of the five pleasures of sense, and the life of a slave-servant who rises up earlier, goes to bed later, is always keen to carry out the master's orders and anxious to make himself agreeable to his master in everything.[1] The Buddha further adds that the slave wants to live like a king and in order to earn merits for that purpose becomes a recluse. And he poses the counter-question : "The very man whom, under ordinary circumstances, you would treat as a slave-servant, —what treatment would you mete out to him after he had joined the Order?" The king confesses that he would treat him as a person worthy of honour and respect, and would honour him with a seat, robes, a bowl, a lodging place and medicine.[2] The above discourse of the Buddha leaves no doubt that the life of a recluse offered to the members of the lower orders not only prospects of immediate relief from poverty, but was also supposed to earn merit for a happier life in the next birth. In the same passage the Buddha contrasts the luxurious life of the king with the life of a tax-paying agriculturist householder, and states that he may also be actuated by similar motives for a happier life and decide to become a recluse.[3] It is significant that there is no mention of the brāhmaṇas and the kṣatriyas in this connection, which may suggest that in joining the Samgha the poorer sections of the vaiśyas, and the śūdras, were generally moved by materialistic interests. They envied the life of the monks, who 'having eaten good meals, lie down in beds sheltered from the wind.'[4]

But the rules of the Buddhist and Jain churches did not favour the release of considerable sections of the labouring masses from their worldly obligations. There was no permission

1. *dāso kammakaro pubbuṭṭhāyī pacchā-nipātī kiṃkaraṇapaṭissāvī manāpa-cārī piya-vādī mukhullokako. Ibid.*, i, 60.
2. *Ibid.*, i, 60-61.
3. *kassako gahapatiko kāra-kārako rāsi-vaḍḍhako. Dīgha N.*, i, 61.
4. *samaṇā sakyaputtiyā...subhojanāni bhuñjitvā nivātesu sayanesu sayanti. Vin.*, i, 77.

either for a slave or a debtor to join the Buddhist church,[1] unless the former had been manumitted by his master and the latter had cleared his debts. But the Buddhist position with regard to the admission of the slave to the church seems to be contradictory. In the course of a discourse the Buddha pointedly asks Ajātaśatru if he would claim back the ex-slave, who is a member of the Order, and compel him to work again as slave. To this the king replies in a clear negative.[2] This may suggest the possibility of a *dāsa-kammakara* joining the Buddhist church without the permission of his master, but such cases were probably rare. In the Jain church also, among those who were excluded from entering the monastic order, were robbers, king's enemies, debtors, attendants, servants, and forcibly converted people.[3]

While accepting the existing social and economic relations Buddhism and Jainism tried to improve the position of slaves in some other ways. Thus a Dharmasūtra forbids trade in human beings only for the brāhmana,[4] who can, however, exchange slaves for slaves.[5] But the Buddhist and Jain sources prohibit trade in human beings even for their lay devotees.[6] Nevertheless, a Buddhist text states that the āryan disciple grows in servitors and retinue,[7] which shows that the lay devotees could increase the number of their slaves by other methods. The monks did not keep slaves. A passage from a Jātaka story[8] has been represented as meaning that the slaves of the bhikkhus go to town to get dainty fare for their sick masters.[9] But this is based on an incorrect rendering of the passage,[10] which does not refer to slaves or servants but to other bhikkhus who attended on their sick brethren and who are addressed as *āvuso*—a term usually applied to the monks.[11]

1. *Dīgha N.*, i, 5.
2. *Ibid.*, i. 60.
3. *Thāṇānga*, III. 202 ; Jain, *op. cit*, p. 194.
4. *Āp Dh. S.*, I 7.20. 11-12.
5. *manuṣyānām ca manuṣyaih. Ibid.*, I. 7 20.15 ; *Vas Dh S.*, II 39.
6. *Aṅg. N*, II, 208 ; *kesāvāṇijje...Uvāsaga.*, p. 51.
7. *dāsakammakaraporisehi vaḍḍhaṁ. Aṅg N.*, v, 137
8. *Jāt.*, iii, 49.
9. Bose, *op. cit.*, ii, 414.
10. *Jāt.*, iii, tr., 33; text, 48.
11. *Ibid.*

Buddhism and Jainism tried to inculcate among their followers a spirit of generosity and kindness towards their employees. Thus a passage from the *Dīgha Nikāya* enjoins that employers should treat their slaves and workpeople decently. They should not be given tasks beyond their strength. They should receive food and wages, be cared for in times of sickness, and be given occasional holidays and shares in the unusual delicacies of the master. On the other hand the servants should be content with their wages, work satisfactorily and maintain the reputation of their master.[1] Similar instructions were issued by Aśoka to his subjects. In the Jātakas also, if the master is the Bodhisatta, the slave receives good treatment.[2] A Jain text states that wealth should be accumulated not only for the sake of kinsmen and kings, but also for the sake of dāsas, dāsīs, kammakaras and kammakarīs, suggesting thereby that these latter deserve to be well maintained by the employer.[3]

We have no precise idea about the extent of the lay following of the heretical sects among the people of the lower classes. Buddhism counted some followers in the artisan community.[4] The Ājīvika sect was in some way especially connected with the potter caste, and made a special appeal to its members.[5] But in any case the reforming religions did not make any fundamental change in the position of the lower orders. The proportion as well as the importance of such people in the Buddhist church seems to have been negligible. In spite of its theory of equality a marked leaning to aristocracy (of all the three varieties, birth, brain and bullion) lingered in ancient Buddhism as an inheritance from the past.[6] It may be going too far to assert that the social organization in India was not in the least altered by Buddha's appearance.[7] But evidently the Buddhists rarely questioned the fundamentals of the varṇa system, which identified the śūdras with the serving class. Thus while refuting the brāhmaṇical

1. *Dīgha N.*, iii, 191.
2. *Jāt.*, i, 451.
3. *Āyār* ; I. 2.5.1.
4. Case of the smith Cunda, *Dict. of Pāli Proper Names*, i, 876-77.
5. Basham, *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, p. 134.
6. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 155-9.
7. Fick, *SONI*, p. 32.

claims to superiority over the three other varṇas, Gautama argues that as regards descent the kṣatriyas are higher and the brāhmaṇas are lower. But he does not question the superiority of either the brāhmaṇas or the kṣatriyas over the vaiśyas and the śūdras.[1] Buddhism, therefore, merely tries to show that caste is of no value in the search for emancipation.[2] Like Christianity, none of the religious reforming movements of this period ever attacked the basis of slavery ; they never tried to abolish the economic and political disabilities of the śūdras.

The above study will show that the ambiguous position of the śūdras disappeared in post-Vedic times, when they were deprived of the remnants of their tribal rights and saddled with economic, political, social and religious disabilities. They were sharply distinguished from the three upper varṇas, denied the right to Vedic sacrifice, initiation, education, and administrative appointments, and above all were specifically assigned the task of serving the twice-born as slaves, agricultural labourers and artisans. In this respect the picture of the lower orders, as it appears in the early Buddhist and Jain works, is not essentially dissimilar. The Buddhist texts repeatedly describe the members of the first three varṇas as opulent,[3] but leave out the śūdras, the dāsas and the kammakaras. The Buddha is described as having visited the assemblies of the brāhmaṇa, the khattiya and gahapati devotees (upāsakas),[4] but the assembly of the śūdras is not mentioned.

It would be superficial to suggest that mere ideas of ceremonial purity and cleanliness led to the exclusion of the śūdras from the sacrificial rites and table of the people of the higher varṇas.[5] The fact has to be stressed that such ideas could develop only after a considerable section of society had been condemned to the position of a hereditary working class and consequently had come to be regarded as impure because of their

1. *Dīgha N.*, i, 91-98.
2. Fick, *SONI*, p. 31.
3. *Aṅg.N.*, iv, 239 ; *Saṃy N.*, iv, 239, *Jāt.*, i, 49.
4. *Aṅg.N.*, iii, 307 f.
5. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, p.133. Even during this period the śūdras prepared food for the higher varṇas on the occasion of the *vaiśvadeva* sacrifice.

manual work. This spirit of contempt for the physical labour of the lower orders ultimately degenerated into the practice of untouchability.

The Dharmasūtras, especially of Vasiṣṭha and Gautama, display a strong tendency to reduce the vaiśyas to the position of śūdras in matters of purity, food and marriage—a process which has its parallel in the Buddhist texts. The Buddha declares that in the way they are addressed, received, approached and treated, the kṣatriyas and the brāhmaṇas take precedence over the vaiśyas and the śūdras.[1] In a later Buddhist text (probably of the Mauryan period) gotras are associated only with the kṣatriyas and the brāhmaṇas.[2] In an introductory passage of a Jātaka it is claimed that the Buddhas are never born in the vaiśya or the śūdra caste but they are born in the two other higher castes.[3] This passage, however, does not form part of the Jātaka proper, and may be ascribed to a later period. A similar idea is expressed with regard to the birth of the Jain teachers, who are supposed to be never born in low, mean, degraded, poor, indigent or brāhmanical families.[4] Apparently the brāhmaṇas are included in this list because of heretical hostility to them. But the remaining members of the list may be roughly assigned to the lower orders. The tendency to approximate the vaiśyas to the position of śūdras probably gained ground towards the end of our period. It may have swelled the numbers of the śūdras by throwing into their ranks impoverished sections of the vaiśyas, but this does not seem to have affected their status during this period. Similarly the reforming religions did not effect any significant change in the existing social system, and in the main the economic and politico-legal disabilities of the śūdras continued as ever.

There is very scanty information as to how the śūdras reacted to these disabilities. But even on this basis it is difficult to accept the view that "the bitter struggle for existence was wanting"

1. *Majj.N.*, ii 128 ; cf. ii, 147ff.
2. *Sut. Nipā.*, 314-15.
3. *Jāt.*, i, 49 ; cf. *Lalitavistara*, I.20.
4. *anta kulesu vā panta.. tuccha.. daridda. kuma...bhikkhāga.. māhaṇa... Kalpasūtra*, II. 17, cf. 22.

and that the social order worked harmoniously.[1] A passage from Vasiṣṭha enumerates the following characteristics of the śūdras: backbiting, untruth, cruelty, faultfinding, condemnation of the brāhmaṇas and continued hostility.[2] This may give an indication of the hostile attitude of the śūdras to the existing order in general and to its ideological leaders, the brāhmaṇas, in particular. But, as shown earlier, the masters seem to have been more hostile and callous towards their slaves and hired labourers[3] than the latter towards their masters. The solitary instance of the revolt of the dāsas, which is found in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*,[4] is of a mild nature. It is said that at one time the slaves of the Śākyas of Kapilvastu got out of hand, and robbed and violated some Sākyan women, who had gone off to a jungle for feeding some monks.[5]

The usual form of protest adopted by the members of the lower orders was to run away from their master's work. This happened not only in the case of the gahapatis oppressed with taxes[6] but also in that of the artisans and the slaves. A later Jātaka informs us that, failing to carry out the orders for which pre-payment had been made, a settlement of woodworkers were summoned to fulfil the contract. But instead of "abiding in their lot" with "oriental stoicism" they made a mighty boat secretly and emigrated with their families, slipping down to the Gaṅgā by night, and so out to sea till they reached a fertile island.[7] Escape from work seems to have been a common practice with the dāsas. Mrs. Rhys Davids wrongly states that there are no instances of runaway slaves.[8] In the Jātakas there are at least two instances of slaves gaining freedom by flight.[9] Runaway slaves are also mentioned as joining the Buddhist church.[10] In

1. Bandyopadhyaya, *Eco. Life and Progress in Ancient India*, p.302, 509-10.
2. *dīrghavairamasūyā cāsatyam brāhmaṇadūṣaṇam; paiśunyaṃ nindayatvam ca jānīyāt śūdralakṣaṇam. Va., Dh.S., VI*, 24.
3. *Supra*, pp. 108-9.
4. iv, 181-2.
5. *sākiyadāsakā avaruddhā honti...sākiyan'yo acchindiṃsu ca...Vin.*, iv, 181-2.
6. *Jāt.*, v, 98-99.
7. *Jāt.*, iv, 159; *CHI*, i, 210.
8. *CHI*, i, 205.
9. *Jāt.*, i, 451-2, 458.
10. *Vin.*, i, 74-6.

a later Jātaka, in order to save their lives, intended victims for sacrifice offer to work in chains as slaves of a tyrannical priest.[1] This may suggest that in some cases chains were used to prevent the escape of the slaves. The late Buddhist tradition about Makkhali Gosāla, the Ājīvika leader, being a runaway slave, even if not true,[2] presupposes the possibility of escape on the part of a slave. In one case the dāsas and the kammakaras, in the absence of any control from the master, run away with his possessions.[3] All these instances show that usually the members of the working class expressed their resentment against the existing order by fleeing from their work, slave revolts of the Greek or the Roman type being absent. The Dharmasūtras, however, state that in the case of an intermixture of the varṇas, even the brāhmaṇas and the vaiśyas can take up arms in self-defence, the kṣatriyas always enjoying this right.[4] The fact that in an emergency only the members of the three varṇas could bear arms[5] suggests that the lawgiver had in mind an eventuality when the śūdras might attempt to remove by force the frontiers of the varṇas. Although there is no example of such an attempt, except the mild revolt of the slaves in Kapilavastu, the provision laid down by Vasiṣṭha implies that, in view of the disabilities imposed on the śūdras, the members of the upper varṇas apprehended revolts on their part.

1. *Jāt.*, vi, 138.

2. Basham, *op.cit.*, p. 37

3. *Jāt.*, vi, 69 (present story).

4. *Bau.Dh.S.*, II.2 4.18. *ātmatrāṇe varṇasaṃvarge...Vas. Dh. S.* III. 24-25. The word *varṇasaṃvarge* occurs in MS. B, which is considered as the most important by Führer (*Vasiṣṭha Dharmaśāstra*, Introd, p.5). Other MSS. use the terms *dharmasaṃkarge* and *varṇasaṃkare*.

5. Slaves were not used as combatants in war among the Greeks and Romans: Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity*, p. 37.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAURYAN STATE CONTROL

(*c.* 300 B.C.—*c.* 200 B.C.)

Our chief source for the study of the position of the śūdras during the Mauryan period is the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, which can be supplemented by the fragments from the account of Megasthenes, and the inscriptions of Aśoka. But perhaps no single question in ancient Indian history has been debated so much as the date and authenticity of the *Arthaśāstra*.[1] On the one hand it is passionately held that the work belongs to Kauṭilya, the minister of Candragupta ; on the other this is vehemently denied and the work is ascribed to the first or the third century A.D. It is not possible to recapitulate the whole controversy, but certain observations seem to be necessary. The one great weakness of the arguments of the opposite school is their negative character. A verse at the end of the *Arthaśāstra* clearly attributes this work to one who destroyed the Nandas,[2]—a tradition which is recorded in later brāhmaṇical and Jain literature. This verse is particularly valuable in view of the fact that such biographical notices about the authors of the Dharmasūtras and the Smṛtis are conspicuously wanting in other cases. Further, no literary source gives any alternative information suggesting that Kauṭilya belonged to some other period.

In a recent paper some new grounds have been adduced to show that the *Arthaśāstra* was a work of the period from the first to the third centuries A.D.[3] It is contended that in Kauṭilya's classification of knowledge positive sciences had begun to be separated from philosophy, and that this process can be assigned

1. A fairly exhaustive bibliography on the subject is to be found on pp. 285-6 of *The Age of Imperial Unity*.

2. *AŚ*, XV. 1.

3. V. Kalyanov, "Dating the Arthaśāstra", *Papers presented by the Soviet Delegation at the XXIII International Congress of Orientalists*, pp. 40-54.

to the early centuries of the Christian era.[1] But there is no doubt that the principal disciplines mentioned by Kauṭilya, i.e. *kalpa*, (ritual), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), and *nirukta* (etymology), existed as subjects of study in the pre-Mauryan period. It is to be further noted that the mention of the *lokāyata* (materialistic) system of philosophy in the *Arthaśāstra* does not imply any later date for that work.[2] The *lokāyata* system is perhaps pre-Buddhistic,[3] and definitely pre-Mauryan, for it is clearly mentioned in the early Buddhist texts.[4]

It is also argued that the compilation of the *Arthaśāstra* presupposes a long tradition in the field of political science which could only develop in the course of several hundred years.[5] This fact is acknowledged by Kauṭilya himself, who mentions as many as ten predecessors in his field.[6] That there was a long tradition of this kind in the pre-Mauryan period is testified by the Dharmasūtras. According to one calculation the *artha* contents account for $\frac{1}{15}$ of the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*, $\frac{1}{12}$ of the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*, $\frac{1}{6}$ of the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*.[7] This points to the growing importance of the subject of *artha*, ultimately leading to the creation of an independent work on the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya.

It is further maintained that the Arthaśāstra policy of avoiding extremes and following a middle path is found in the philosophical work *Madhyānta-vibhaṅga*,[8] which can be ascribed to the third century A.D. But the enunciation of the doctrine of the middle path known as the *majjhimā paṭipadā* is as old as the text of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*,[9] where in his very first sermon the Buddha is represented as teaching his followers to abandon the the two extremes of asceticism and luxury.

1. *Ibid*, pp. 44-45.
2. *Ibid*., p. 45.
3. R. Garbe, Hasting's *Encycl of Religion and Ethics*, viii, 138 ; cf Ruben, *Einführung in die Indienkunde*, p. 126
4. *Dīgha N*., i, 130 , *Majj. N*., ii, 165.
5. Kalyanov, *op.cit*., p. 46.
6. *AŚ*, I. 2,8.
7. K V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Indian Cameralism*, p. 50.
8. Kalyanov, *op. cit*., p. 48.
9. *Vin*., i, 10 ; *Samy. N*., v, 421.

Finally, it is held that the kind of relations of production, the social system and political institutions described in the *Arthaśāstra* are in a much more advanced stage of development than those referred to in the reports of Megasthenes and in the inscriptions of Aśoka, and seem to be characteristic of the period between the first and the third centuries A.D.[1] But the evidence for such a view seems to be tenuous. The capital fact in the relations of production as known from the *Arthaśāstra* is a large measure of state control over all sectors of economy. The Kauṭilyan state does not only control trade, industry and mining, but the superintendents of agriculture, while working the state farms with the help of the dāsas and karmakaras, mobilise the services of the blacksmiths, the carpenters, the diggers etc. for the purpose.[2] This development is borne out by the fragments quoted by Strabo from Megasthenes. We learn that great officers of the state not only superintended the rivers and looked after irrigation, but also measured the land and supervised occupations connected with land such as those of woodcutters, carpenters, blacksmiths and miners.[3] Similarly the social system outlined in the *Arthaśāstra* is modelled after the brāhmaṇical pattern.

The distinctive feature of the *Arthaśāstra* polity is to exalt monarchical power (*rāja-śāsana*) over all other sources of authority,[4] and to make it felt among the subjects through as many as thirty departments. That this was the general policy of the Mauryan empire is in the main borne out by the inscriptions of Aśoka, who acted as a promulgator of the dharma and who possessed a fairly well organised bureaucracy. Significantly enough the tendency towards the all-pervading power of the state as represented by the king also manifested itself in the empire of Alexander and was carried forward by the Hellenistic monarchies which arose on its ruins.[5] Thus Strabo, quoting from

1. Kalyanov, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
2. *AŚ*, II. 14.
3. McCrindle, *AIMA*, p. 86, Frag. 34.
4. *AŚ*, III. 1.
5. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "Royal Power in Ancient India", *The Proceedings of the IHC* (1944), p. 46.

Megasthenes, rightly compares the magistrates in India with similar officers in Hellenistic Egypt.[1] Kauṭilya claims to have studied the practices prevailing in the contemporary states,[2] and hence his exaltation of the monarchical power seems to reflect the spirit of the age.

But there is no denying the fact that, like so many other works, the *Arthaśāstra* may have been recast in later times. Therefore the problem is to find out the later accretions made to the primary kernal.[3] Nevertheless, it is now generally recognised that the *Arthaśāstra* contains genuine Mauryan reminiscences.

Although the Mauryan empire extended practically over the whole of India except the far south and although Kauṭilya shows a wide geographical horizon, possibly the provisions laid down in the *Arthaśāstra* reflect conditions obtaining in Northern India. In so far as the *Arthaśāstra* measures were meant to serve the needs of the empire by overriding parochial and sectarian considerations, they may have been applied to the whole of it ; but the detailed instructions regarding the control of economic activities or the policy of bringing virgin soil under the plough may have been limited to the areas near the heart of the empire.

In defining the functions of the śūdra varṇa Kauṭilya uses the Dharmasūtra terminology. He states that the śūdra's means of livelihood is derived from his service of the twice-born.[4] But they can support themselves by the professions of artisans, dancers, actors etc.,[5] which are apparently independent occupations, not implying the service of the twice-born.

The Dharmaśūtra terminology used by Kauṭilya may suggest that the śūdras continued to be completely dependent for their livelihood on their masters of the upper varnas. But the

1. McCrindle, *AICL*, p. 53, Frag. 50.
2. *AŚ*, II. 10.
3. Kalyanov, *op. cit*, p. 54.
4. *AŚ*, I. 3. In the phrase '*śūdrasya dvijātiśuśrūṣā vārtā*' the term *vārtā* is not used in the sense of the three occupations of agriculture, tending of cattle and trade, as Shama Sastry thinks (*Tr.*, p 7), but in the sense of livelihood (*Jayamaṅgalā JOR*, xx, 11.
5. *AŚ*, I. 3.

śāstra introduces us to some independent śūdra cultivators ing land. Kauṭilya lays down that in founding a new lement villages, consisting of a hundred to five hundred ilies each, should be set up at the interval of two or four es and should be mainly inhabited by śūdra karṣakas (cultiva-s.)[1] Some scholars take the terms *śūdra* and *karṣaka* as forming *vandva* compound (*śūdrakarṣakprāyam*)[2], indicating thereby t śūdras were not peasants, while others treat śūdra as an ective of *karṣaka*.[3] The interpretation of this phrase is dered difficult by the fact that it occurs neither anywhere else the *Arthaśāstra*, nor in any brāhmanical text; the available mmentaries on the *Arthaśāstra* do not cover the section on the *apadaniveśa*. At one place the karṣaka has been considered a karmakara,[4] i.e. a hired labourer, but probably the word e cannot be taken in that sense. It is not unlikely that in new tlements initiated by the state landless śūdras were enrolled temporary peasants.

Kauṭilya provides that in the new settlements land should made suitable for cultivation by the state and then given the taxpayers for life.[5] It seems that this settlement was ade with śūdra cultivators, who were responsible for the yment of taxes to the state. But they held land on a tenure ich probably did not apply to cultivators (presumably the śyas) in the old villages. The śūdra cultivators were to be ovided with grain, cattle and money,[6] for, without these, ndless labourers could not overnight turn into sturdy farmers d make use of the land assigned to them. The concession is made with the hope that they would willingly pay taxes the state. Secondly, the śūdra cultivators probably did not

1. *śūdrakarṣakaprāyaṃ kulaśatāvaraṃ pañcaśatakulaparaṃ grāmaṃ krośadvikrośasīmānamanyonyārakṣaṃ nivēśayet*. *AŚ*, II. 1.

2. I. J. Sorabji, *Some Notes on the Adhyakṣapracāra Bk. II of the Kauṭilīyam śāstram, s.v.* śūdrakarṣaka prāyam in *AŚ*, II. 1; J. J. Meyer, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben*, tr. of *AŚ*; 1.

3. TGS, i, 109; SS's tr. of *AŚ*, II, 1.

4. TGS's comm. to the term *dāsakarmakarakalpa* in *AŚ*, III. 13.

5. *AŚ*, II. 1. TGS interprets the term '*aikapuruṣikāni*' as 'individually' 111) and SS (tr.) as 'for life-time'.

6. *AŚ*, II. 1.

enjoy security of tenure. Kauṭilya provides that if in the settlements cultivators fail to carry on their work, they will be distrained of their lands, which will be allotted to the trader (*vaidehaka*) or the village officer (*grāmabhṛtaka*) for cultivation.[1] This may not have been the case with the old vaiśya cultivators, who enjoyed *de facto* hereditary possession over their fields.

In the new settlements, besides agriculture, the services of the śūdra population could be utilised for other purposes. It is stated that a new stettlement, which is mainly inhabited by the śūdras (*avara varṇaprāya*), is capable of yielding sure results and bearing all burdens imposed on them by the state.[2] According to the commentary *Nayacandrikā* the meaning of the term *bhoga* indicates that the śūdras were to be engaged not only in cultivation but also in carrying loads and building forts.[3] It is also said that a settlement inhabited by śūdras enjoys the advantage of numerical strength.[4] For the purpose of opening up new lands to cultivation or rehabilitating old sites the śūdras were to be drafted from the areas which were overpopulated or induced to migrate from foreign kingdoms.[5] It is stated that the *janapada* should have a numerous population of the lowest varṇa.[6] All this would suggest that the country had a considerable śūdra population, perhaps the majority belonging to this varṇa. It is, however, not known what percentage of this population was accounted for by these tax-paying independent śūdra cultivators. Such cultivators, being confined to the new settlements, must have been limited in number. And in other parts of the country, mainly inhabited by established vaiśya peasants, the śūdras may not have been principally liable for payment of the

1. *Ibid.*

2. *tasyāṃ cāturvarṇyābhiniveśaṃ sarvabhogasahatādaveravarṇaprāyā śreyasī bāhulyāt dhruvatvācca....AŚ*, VII. 11. The *Nayacandrikā* (p.33) explains the term *avaravarṇaprāya* as *śūdraprāya*.

3. *karṣaṇabhārāvahanadurgakaraṇādiviniyogaḥ, tadyogyatvādityarthaḥ. Nayacandrikā*, p. 33.

4. *AŚ*, VII. 11.

5. *paradeśāpavāhanena svadeśābhiṣyandavamanena vā*, *AŚ*, II. 1.

6. *avaravarṇaprāyaḥ. AŚ*, VI. 1.

land revenue and other charges, as is suggested by Ghoshal.[1] Even the śūdras who were peasants in new settlements were not exempt from the imposition of forced labour, for in the section on the *janapadaniveśa* Kauṭilya warns that the king should protect agriculture against oppressive *corvée* (*viṣṭi*).[2]

Probably the main body of the śūdra population continued to be employed as agricultural labourers and slaves. Slavery, as known from the Dharmasūtras, was domestic in nature. Kauṭilya is the first and the only brāhmaṇical writer who furnishes evidence of dāsas being employed in agricultural production on a substantial scale.[3] While in the early Pāli texts there are only three instances of big farms, in the Mauryan period there seem to have existed numerous such farms, worked with slaves and hired labourers in the direct employ of the *sītādhyakṣa* (superintendent of agriculture). He supplied them with agricultural implements and other accessories, and requisitioned the services of carpenters, blacksmiths and other artisans for the purpose.[4] This fact is broadly attested by Megasthenes, who mentions the officers superintendening occupations connected with land and also those of the artisans.[5] Arrian speaks of the superintendents of agriculture,[6] who probably performed the functions of the *sītādhyakṣa*. Strabo informs us that the third caste of shepherds and hunters led a nomadic life and were given an allowance of corn from the king for keeping out the wild beasts and birds from the land.[7] They seem to be similar to the nomadic aboriginals (*saṛpagrāhādikāḥ*, i. e. people engaged in catching snakes and others),[8] who were pressed into the service of agriculture by the *sītādhyakṣa*.[9] The Mauryan state therefore was a great employer of dāsas and karmakaras, artisans and the aboriginal peoples, who apparently belonged to

1. *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 55.
2. *AŚ*, II. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, II. 14.
4. *Ibid.*
5. McCrindle, *AIMA*, p. 86, Frag. 34.
6. *Ibid.*, *AICL*, p. 53, fn. 4.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 48, Frag. 41.
8. According to Bhaṭṭasvāmin the *rajjuvartakas* were śvapākas and others, and the *sarpagrāhādikas* were śabaras and others. *JBORS*, xii, 143.
9. *AŚ*, II. 24.

the śūdra class. And in this respect the organization of agricultural production in this period resembles to some extent that which prevailed in Greece and Rome.

Kauṭilya lays down that, if fields cannot be sown (apparently due to shortage of labour power), they can be leased to those who cultivate for half the share of the produce[1] Those who live by bodily labour (i.e.karmakaras) and therefore do not possess seeds and oxen necessary for cultivation can cultivate such lands, but may retain only one fourth or one fifth of the produce; presumably their seed and oxen were provided by the state.[2] Kauṭilya enunciates the principle that the sharecroppers should pay to the king as much as they can without entailing any hardship upon themselves, but he does not indicate the nature of such hardships.[3] It seems that the sharecroppers were also allotted some land with hard soil, for which they had not to pay anything to the state.[4] Evidently there were two kinds of sharecroppers—the one retaining half and the other retaining $\frac{1}{4}$th or $\frac{1}{5}$th of their crops. The former are described by the commentator Bhaṭṭasvāmin as *grāmyakuṭumbinaḥ*.[5] In the section on the *durganiveśa* (building of the capital) Kauṭilya provides that the *kuṭumbinas* should be settled on the boundary of the capital to meet the requirements of their field work and other occupations.[6] It is said that they shall work in flower gardens, forest gardens, vegetable gardens and paddy fields[7] and collect plenty of grain and merchandise as authorised. In this context the term *kuṭumbinaḥ* has been explained by T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī as a person belonging to the lowest varṇa (*varṇāvarāṇām*),[8] and by Shama Sastry as families of workmen.[9] Thus the *kuṭumbinas* were probably śūdra sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. This use of the term is rather unusual since in most

1. *AŚ*. II. 24.
2. *Ibid.*, II. 24. Commentary of Bhaṭṭasvāmin, *op. cit.*, 137.
3. *AŚ*, II. 24.
4. *anyatra kṛcchrebhyaḥ. Ibid.*
5. *JBORS*, xii, 137.
6. *karmāntakṣetra:aśena vā kuṭumbinaṃ sīmānaṃ sthāpayet. AŚ*, II. 4.
7. In his translation SS says that these were *allotted* to them, but there is nothing in the text to support this.
8. i, 130.
9. *Tr*, p. 54.

sources *kuṭumbinaḥ* means simply the head of a family,[1] but the context indicates that here it has a specialised meaning.

Possibly in the old settlements a large number of śūdras, agricultural labourers, slaves and artisans was employed by proprietors of the higher varṇas. The gopa, who is in charge of the collection of taxes from the peasants, is required to register the total number of the inhabitants in each village and also of half a dozen producing sections of society—namely the karsakas (cultivators), the goraksakas (herdsmen or owners of cattle), the vaidehakas (traders), the kārus (artisans), the karmakaras and the dāsas.[2] It seems that the list includes the members of the two lower varṇas, the first three groups belonging to the vaiśyas and the remaining three to the śūdras. Megasthenes does not enumerate the producing castes in this order. While the vaiśya agriculturists (karsakas) of Kauṭilya roughly correspond to the caste of husbandmen mentioned by Megasthenes,[3] the vaiśya traders and śūdra artisans and labourers correspond to the third caste of Megasthenes the members of which work at trades, vend wares and are employed in bodily labour.[4] Megasthenes further adds that some of these pay taxes and render to the state certain prescribed services.[5] The first part of the statement probably refers to the traders and the second part to the artisans and labourers. In the *Arthaśāstra* the śūdras probably come under the category of the non-taxpayers, whose number also is to be recorded by the gopa.[6] In the tax-paying villages a list is to be maintained of those who supply free labour (*viṣṭi*) to the state.[7] Commenting on a passage of the *Arthaśāstra* Bhaṭṭasvāmin suggests that one type of villages was meant only for supply of free labour in lieu of taxes and its inhabitants were employed in building fortresses etc.[8] T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī rightly

1. *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 260, fn. 2.
2. *AŚ*, II. 35.
3. McCrindle, *AIMA*, pp. 83-84, Frag. 33.
4. *Ibid. AIGL*, p. 53, Strabo, Frag. 46.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *AŚ*, II. 35.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *AŚ*, II. 15. *etāvanto viṣṭiḥ atikarāḥ.. durgādikarmaṇi yog'bhiḥ. JBORS*, xii, 19[8].

says that this type of work was done by the karmakaras,[1] for the class of the dāsas and the karmakaras is regarded as always liable to forced labour.[2] All this would suggest that, excepting those who were temporary peasant proprietors in the new settlements established by the state or sharecroppers working on the crown lands, the śūdras were mostly tax-free and were generally employed as agricultural labourers and slaves, who did not possess any independent means of livelihood.

Kauṭilya gives us some information about the working conditions of the herdsmen, who seem to have been employed in large numbers by the state, under the general control of the superintendent of cattle.[3] He fixes their wages at 1/10 of the butter clarified,[4] but is very particular about their functions. While emphasising the responsibilities of the herdsmen, Kauṭilya provides that, if the loss of the animal is on account of the fault of the herdsman, even capital punishment can be inflicted on him.[5] This extreme measure, which is not mentioned in the law-books of the pre-Mauryan period, was either inspired by the great economic importance attached to animal wealth, or by the teachings of Buddhism and Jainism, or by both the factors.

We may next examine the *Arthaśāstra* evidence regarding the employment, control and wages of the artisans in so far as they throw light on the general position of the śūdras. Reference has already been made to the artisans who were mobilised by the state to help agriculture. Many others seem to have been employed by the state in weaving,[6] mining,[7] storekeeping,[8] manufacture of arms,[9] metal work[10] etc. In the earlier period artisans such as weavers appear in the employment of the gahapati, but now they are employed in larger numbers by the

1. i, 344.
2. *...dāsakarmakaravargaśca viṣṭiḥ. AŚ*, II. 15.
3. *AŚ*, II. 29.
4. *Ibid.*, III. 13.
5. *svayaṃ hantā ghātayitā hartā hārayitā ca vadhyaḥ. Ibid.*, II. 29.
6. *AŚ*, II. 23.
7. *Ibid.*, II. 12.
8. *Ibid.*, II. 15.
9. *Ibid.*, II. 18.
10. *Ibid*, II. 17.

state.[1] The artisans probably owned their tools, but were supplied with raw materials by the state. There is no mention of slaves being engaged in any of these crafts. They also did not work in mining operations, which were conducted by the karmakaras.[2]

But the employment of artisans by the state seems to have been mainly limited to the capital and perhaps the important cities, which had a considerable artisan population. It is laid down that the artisans can reside to the north of the royal palace and the guilds of workmen and others should be allotted their residence in the several corners of the capital.[3] It is further stated that people of the śūdra caste and artisans manufacturing worsted threads, cotton threads, bamboo mats, skins, armour, weapons and scabbards should be allotted their dwellings to the west of the royal palace.[4] Probably some of these worked under sūtrādhyaksa,[5] while others worked under the superintendent of armoury.[6] Megasthenes informs us that the armour-makers and ship-builders received wages and provisions from the kings and worked only for them.[7] Besides, in the city there was a committee of five to look after everything relating to industrial arts.[8] All this suggests that the state control and employment of artisans was mainly confined to the cities. But Megasthenes also states that great officers of the state supervised the occupations of woodcutters, carpenters, blacksmiths and miners,[9] which may indicate some sort of general control over the artisans living outside the city.

The *Arthaśāstra* is the earliest Indian text which lays down general rules regarding the relation between the employers and the employees. Artisans are regarded as a source of

1. *AŚ*, II. 23.
2. *Ibid.*, II. 12.
3. *Ibid.*, II. 4.
4. *tataḥ paramūrṇāsūtrāvemucarmavarmaśastrājīvāḥ avaśśūdrāsca paścimam diśamadhivaseyuḥ. AŚ*, II. 4.
5. *AŚ*, II. 23.
6. *Ibid.*, II. 18.
7. McCrindle, *AICL*, p. 53, Strabo, Frag. 46.
8. *Ibid.*, *AIMA*, p. 87, Frag. 34.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 86, Frag. 34.

trouble, against which several measures are provided in the section on the *kārukara-rakṣaṇam*. The artisans must fulfil their engagements as to time, place and form of work. Failure in this respect, except when due to "troubles and calamities", will involve not only the forfeiture of a quarter of their wages, but also a fine twice the amount of wages and the payment of damages into the bargain.[1] The violation of instructions in the course of work shall be punished with the forfeiture of wages and a fine twice the amount.[2] A servant, who neglects his work, for which pre-payment has been made, shall be fined 12 paṇas and be made to work till his job is finished.[3] He will not be, however, subjected to such a fine if he is incapable of doing work due to reasons beyond his control.[4] On the other hand Kauṭilya also lays down certain regulations protecting the artisans. Thus those who seek to deprive the artisans of their just earnings, by minimising the quality of their work or obstructing the sale and purchase of goods, shall be fined a thousand paṇas.[5] An employer not taking work from his labourer shall be fined 12 paṇas,[6] and if he refuses to take work without any sufficient grounds, the work will be taken as done.[7] Kauṭilya concedes one privilege to the artisans who are organised into guilds. They can have a grace of seven nights over and above the period agreed upon for executing the contract.[8]

As regards the fixation of wages, Kauṭilya enunciates the general principle that wages should be fixed according to the time and quality of the work. He further states that artisans, musicians, physicians, cooks and other workmen shall obtain as much wages as similar persons employed elsewhere usually get, or as much as experts shall fix.[9] The servant shall get the promised wages ; but if they are not settled first, a cultivator

1. *AŚ*, IV. 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *AŚ*, III. 14.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *AŚ*, IV. 2.
6. *bhaṇturkārayato bhṛtakasyākurvato vā dvādaśapaṇo daṇḍaḥ. AŚ*, III. 15.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *AŚ*, III. 14.
9. *kārukuśilpikuśīlavacikitsakavāgjīvanaparicārakādirāśikārikavargastu yathā'nyastadvidhaḥ kuryāt, yathā vā kuśalāḥ kalpayeyuḥ, tathā vetanaṃ labheta. AŚ*, III. 13.

(i. e. an agricultural labourer) should get $\frac{1}{10}$ of the crops grown, a herdsman $\frac{1}{10}$ of the butter clarified and a trader $\frac{1}{10}$ of the sale proceeds.[1] Here a distinction has to be made between the share-cropping agricultural labourers who were entitled to receive $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{5}$ of the crops on the crown lands, and the general agricultural labourer who received only $\frac{1}{10}$ of the crops.

According to Kauṭilya disputes regarding wages are to be decided on the strength of evidence furnished by witnesses. If they are not available, the employer shall be examined.[2] The fact that the employee is not to be examined in this connection obviously makes it difficult to establish the guilt of the master. But if it is found that he has failed to pay wages, the master should be punished with a fine either ten times the amount of the wages or six paṇas. Besides, misappropriation of wages will mean a fine of twelve paṇas or of five times the amount of the wages.[3] On the basis of these rules we get two different rates of wages, namely $\frac{3}{5}$ paṇa or $2\frac{2}{5}$ paṇa. Thus it seems that the daily wage of a worker varied from $\frac{3}{5}$ paṇa to $2\frac{2}{5}$ paṇas. At one place Kauṭilya states that, in addition to the provisions, the agricultural workers should receive a monthly wage of $1\frac{1}{4}$ paṇas. The *Arthaśāstra* shows a wide gap between the pay of the higher officials, who, as will be shown, were recruited from the upper classes, and the artisans who belonged to the lower orders. The highest pay is provided for the priest (ṛtvij), the teacher, the minister, the purohita, the commander of the army etc., who get a (monthly) salary of 48,000 paṇas.[4] Lesser officials are recommended a salary of 24,000, 12,000 or 8,000 paṇas,[5] but the artisans are recommended 120 paṇas.[6] It is important, however, to note that the *vardhaki*, who seems to have been the chief carpenter, is provided a salary of 2,000 paṇas like the physician and the charioteer.[7] Consideration is also shown to the *grāmabhṛtaka* (the

1. *AŚ*, III. 13.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *AŚ*, V. 3.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*

village officer)[1] and the servant leading the spies, the first getting a salary of 500 panas and the second getting 200 panas.[2] The smallest salary of 60 paṇas is recommended for the servants who are in charge of quadrupeds and bipeds, workmen doing miscellaneous work, attendants upon the royal person, bodyguards and the procurer of free labour.[3] Presuming that this payment was made on a monthly basis, it works out at the rate of two paṇas a day for an ordinary labourer. But the rate of $\frac{3}{5}$ paṇa a day worked out earlier may suggest that private individuals paid even less than 2 paṇas.

The artisans and wage earners were the worst paid members of society, but we can have no precise idea about their standard of living on account of the lack of information about the purchasing power of the paṇa. Kauṭilya, however, provides that the dāsas and karmakaras in the employ of the state should be given "particles of rice" for their support by the superintendent of the storehouse.[4] What remains after such disposal should be given to the cooks engaged in preparing cakes,[5] who may have been slaves, for these were engaged in cooking in the pre-Mauryan period. In connection with the disposal of bad liquor it is said that this shou'd be given as wages to the dāsas and karmakaras because of the low type of their work.[6] Kauṭilya differentiates between the diet of an ordinary ārya and that of a śūdra. An ārya should get as his ration one prastha of pure and unsplit rice, $\frac{1}{64}$ prastha of salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ prastha of soup and $\frac{1}{64}$ prastha of butter or oil; while an anārya should get the same quantity of rice and salt but $\frac{1}{8}$ prastha of soup and only half of oil recommended for an

1. The *grāmabhṛtaka* cannot be taken as an ordinary village servant, as SS thinks (Tr., 277); his salary of 500 paṇas shows that he was a village officer of some importance

2. *AŚ*, V. 3.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *kaṇikāḥ dāsakarmakarasūdakārūpāmato'nyad udanikāpūpikebhyaṃprayacchet. AŚ*, II. 15. The term *kaṇikā* here presumably means a broken part of a grain. The workmen were given the broken grain after threshing.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *dāsakarmakarebhyo vā vetanaṃ dadyāt. AŚ*, II. 25 with the comm. of TGS, i, 292.

ārya,[1] butter being not provided in his case. In this context an avara means a person of the low caste (*nikṛṣṭānām*) and is a śūdra. But an ārya stands for an ordinary member of the higher varṇas,[2] for rations for the āryas of higher grades such as the king, queen and chiefs of army are provided in much greater quantities.[3] All this would show that the śūdras were fed on inferior food.

During the Mauryan period the economic position of the śūdras seems to have undergone several changes. For the first time a section of the śūdras, who were hitherto agricultural labourers, were provided with land in new settlements, though differing in some respects from the old cultivators. They also came to be engaged as sharecroppers on the crown lands. But probably the śūdras were employed on a far larger scale as slaves and labourers in agricultural production by the state. The members of the lower order, who lived in villages either working under the individual cultivators or independently, were subjected to *corvée* on a much larger scale than in the period of the Dharmasūtras, when it was mostly confined to the artisans.[4] The phenomenon had become now so widespread that a class of government servants known as the *viṣṭi bandhakās* worked as procurers of free labour.[5] Though as workers and artisans the śūdras were the worst paid people in society, fixation of wages may have helped to improve their position. Nevertheless, there seems to have been no appreciable change in their standard of living, except perhaps in the case of the śūdra karṣakas.

Unlike the Dharmasūtras, Kauṭilya does not make any explicit statement excluding the śūdras from high administrative posts. But his list of requisite qualifications for kingship and high governmental posts shows that these were looked upon as the special preserve of the members of the three higher varṇas. He states that, in preference to a strong and base-born king,

1. *puṃsaḥ ṣaḍbhāgassūpaḥ ardhasnehamavarāyām.* The term *prastha*, the alternative reading for *puṃsa*, mentioned by SS and accepted by TGS seems to be the correct reading. cf. Prana Natha, *Eco. Condition in Anc. India*, pp. 150-1.
2. He is described as a *madhyamapratipattika sādhupuruṣa by* Bhaṭṭasvāmin. *JBORS*, xi, 91.
3. *AŚ*, II. 15.
4. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 49.
5. *AŚ*, V. 3.

people will naturally obey a king of noble birth, even if he be weak,[1] and therefore in his opinion the king should be born of a higher family.[2] He says that just as the reservoir of water belonging to the caṇḍālas serves only their purpose, so also the king of low birth confers patronage only on low born people and not on the āryas. Incidentally Kauṭilya's dislike of a low born king shows that he could not have agreed to serve under a king born of a śūdra mother. Hence it is not possible to make much of the śūdra origin of the Mauryas, as has been done in some cases.[3] It is practically certain that Candragupta belonged to the Moriya clan of the kṣatriya community.[4]

In the *Arthaśāstra* the amātyas constitute the highest cadre of officials from which the chief priest (purohita), the minister (mantrin), the collector (samāhartā), the treasurer (sannidhātā), officers in charge of the harem, ambassadors and the superintendents of more than two dozen departments are to be recruited.[5] But an item common to the qualifications of the amātyas laid down by Kauṭilya and other thinkers whom he quotes is noble birth. This is expressed variously as "father and grandfather being amātyas", *abhijana* and *jānapadobhijātaḥ*.[6] It is doubtful whether such a qualification could provide any scope for the śūdras. As Aristotle puts it, good birth is nothing but ancient wealth and virtue combined,[7]—a thing which could hardly be found among the lower orders. Megasthenes mentions the professional class of councillors and assessors, who, though small in number, monopolised the highest posts of government, executive and judicial.[8] At another place he states that the noblest and the richest took part in the direction of the state affairs, administered justice and sat in council with the king.[9] That they formed an exclusive caste is obvious from

1. *AŚ*, VIII. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, VI. 1.
3. B. N. Dutt, *Studies in Indian Social Polity*, pp. 185-7. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 171.
4. *PHAI*, p. 267.
5. *AŚ*, I. 8 & 9.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Politics*, p. 163.
8. McCrindle, *AIMA*, p. 85, Frag. 33.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 138, Frag. 56.

the rules that they could not marry outside their own caste, exchange one profession or trade for another, or follow more than one business.[1] All this shows that the avenues to the higher bureaucracy were closed to the people of the lower orders.

The śūdras, however, were given a place in the espionage system, which constituted a vital part of the Mauryan administrative machinery. Kauṭilya provides that, amongst others, women of the śūdra caste can be employed as wandering spies.[2] It is further said that those who are employed as procurers of water for bathing, shampooers, bed-makers, barbers, toilet makers, water servants, actors, dancers and singers, should keep an eye on the private character of the officers of the king.[3] Evidently most of these seem to have been śūdras. Working as menial servants, and thus coming into contact with their masters every minute, they were thought to be the best persons to report correctly on their private character. Further, according to Kauṭilya, almost all sections of people, including cultivators, herdsmen and jungle tribes, should be recruited as spies to watch the movement of enemies,—a provision which covers śūdras as well.[4] Members of the lower orders also acted as messengers, for Kauṭilya states that messengers, though untouchables, do not deserve death.[5]

What is more important, the *Arthaśāstra* provides for the enrolment of śūdras in the army. The Dharmasūtras give the impression that normally only the kṣatriyas, and in emergency only the brāhmaṇas and the vaiśyas, could take up arms. While defining the army as an indispensable element of the state, Kauṭilya also declares that the hereditary army purely composed of kṣatriya soldiers is the most splendid.[6] But he has no liking for the army of brāhmaṇas, who can be won over by salutations and supplications.[7] On the other hand he prefers the army composed of vaiśyas and śūdras on account of its numerical

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6, Frag. 33.
2. *AŚ*, I. 12.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. ... *antāvasāyino'pyavadhyāḥ*. *AŚ*, I. 16.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *AŚ*, IX. 2.

strength.[1] But it is doubtful whether the members of the two lower varṇas were actually recruited as soldiers during this period. Megasthenes clearly states that the husbandmen (roughly corresponding to the vaiśyas) were exempted from military service, and soldiers were meant to protect them.[2] Both Arrian and Strabo speak of the fighting-men as forming the fifth caste of the Indian population and being maintained at the expense of the state.[3] That there was a class of soldiers can also be inferred from the use of the term *bhaṭamayeṣu* in the Aśokan inscriptions.[4] We learn from Megasthenes that one division of the army supplied servants, who performed miscellaneous tasks, such as acting as bandsmen, looking after the horses, and serving as mechanics and their assistants.[5] Arrian also refers to the servants who attend not only on the soldiers but also on their horses, elephants and chariots.[6] Possibly śūdras were recruited as menial servants and attendants in the standing army and not as full-fledged soldiers. Kauṭilya's rule, however, may suggest that vaiśyas and śūdras could be enlisted in the army in times of emergency. In the new settlements aboriginal tribes such as the vāgurikas, the śabaras, the pulindas and the caṇḍālas were entrusted with the work of internal defence.[7]

In the administration of law and justice Kauṭilya follows the principle of varṇa legislation. According to him, degraded people (*patita*), caṇḍālas and persons of mean avocations are among those who cannot act as witnesses in civil suits, except in the transactions of their respective communities.[8] He also lays down that the servant cannot give evidence against the master.[9] Similarly the pledged labourer and the slave cannot enter into agreements on behalf of their masters.[10] Kauṭilya provides

1. *bahulasāraṃ vā vaiśyaśūdrabalamiti. Ibid.*
2. McCrindle, *AIAI*, pp. 83-84, Frag. 33.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 217, Arrian, Frag. 12 ; *AIGI*, p. 53, Strabo, Frag, 47.
4. *R.E.* 4 (Shāhbāzgaṛhī), l. 12.
5. McCrindle, *AIMA*, p. 88, Frag. 34.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 217, Frag. 12.
7. *AŚ*, II. 1.
8. *AŚ*, III. 11.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *AŚ*, III. 1.

for different kinds of warnings tendered by the court to the members of the different varṇas. The most severe warning is to be given to a śūdra who is reminded of terrible spiritual and worldly consequences which shall follow as a result of his false deposition[1] In this connection only the śūdra is to be fined and bound down to service by the court, there being no mention of these things in the case of the three upper varṇas.[2] This provision is immediately followed by another, in which Kauṭilya prescribes a fine of 12 paṇas for witnesses giving false evidence.[4] This may suggest that the penal measure was probably meant for the śūdra witness. Megasthenes says that a person convicted of bearing false witness suffers the mutilation of his extremities.[3] This measure may have been confined either to the members of the lower orders or to a particular area.

In the award of punishments Kauṭilya upholds the varṇa distinctions of the Dharmasūtras. Thus, according to him, if among the members of the four varnas and the antāvasāyins (untouchables), any one of a lower caste speaks ill of a person of a higher caste, he shall have to pay a higher fine than in the case of a person of a higher caste defaming a person of a lower caste.[5] The *Arthaśāstra* has also the rule that the limb of a śūdra with which he strikes a brāhmaṇa should be amputated.[6] We are in doubt whether this passage is the work of Kauṭilya, for it agrees rather with the extremist attitude of Manu. In another provision Kauṭilya states that, if a kṣatriya commits adultery with an unguarded brāhmaṇa woman, he shall be punished with the highest amercement, a vaiśya shall be deprived of his property, and a śūdra shall be burnt alive wound round in mats.[7] A śvapāka who commits adultery with an ārya woman shall be put to death, while the woman shall have her ears and

1. *AŚ*, III. 11.

2. ... *anyathāvāde daṇḍaścānubandhaḥ. Ibid.* In his translation SS (p. 200) leaves out the word '*anubandhaḥ*'.

3. *AŚ*, III. 11.

4. McCrindle, *AIMA*, p. 70, Frag. 27.

5. *AŚ*, III. 18.

6. *AŚ*, III. 19.

7. *brāhmaṇyāmaguptāyāṃ kṣatriyasyottamaḥ, sarvasvaṃ vaiśyasya, śūdraḥ kaṭāgninā dahyet. AŚ*, IV. 13.

nose cut off.[1] It is not surprising that these severe measures were applied against the śūdras and śvapākas, for even in the case of adultery against a woman of the śvapāka caste Kauṭilya provides for the branding and banishment of the guilty.[2]

Kauṭilya's law of prohibition of some kinds of food and drink does not apply in the same way to the members of all the varṇas. Thus a person who causes a brāhmaṇa to partake of prohibited food or drink shall be punished with the highest amercement; the same offence against a kṣatriya will be punished with the middle amercement, against the vaiśya with the first amercement and against the śūdra with a fine of 54 paṇas.[3] In the case of embezzlement or misappropriation the most severe punishment is laid down for the menial servants. If an officer or a clerk is guilty of this offence, he shall be fined, but in such a case a servant shall be given capital punishment.[4]

In the law of inheritance Kauṭilya maintains the old distinction between the varṇas. Sons born out of the intermixture of castes such as the sūta, the māgadha, the vrātya and the rathakāra are entitled to their shares only in the case of abundance of paternal property.[5] Kauṭilya further provides that the sons who are inferior in birth to the above kinds of sons are entitled to no share but can depend for subsistence on the eldest son.[6] This naturally excludes the āyogava, the ksattā, the niṣāda, the pulkasa and the caṇḍālas from shares. The position of the pāraśava (i.e. a son begotten by a brāhmaṇa on a śūdra woman), however, is better. It is said that, if a brāhmaṇa has no issue, the pāraśava son shall get one third share in paternal property;[7] the remainng two shares shall devolve either on his surviving sapiṇḍas, or, failing them, on his teacher or student.[8] This may

1. TGS construes this passage differently from SS. While the former has *śvapākasyāryāgamane vadhaḥ* (ii, 181), the latter has *śūdraśvapākasya bhāryāgaman vadhaḥ* (*AŚ*, IV. 13, p. 236). TGS, however, seems to be correct in using the word *ārya* which also occurs in the Munich manuscript (Tr., p. 264).

2. *AŚ*, IV. 13.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *AŚ*, II. 5.
5. *AŚ*, III. 6.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*

suggest that, if the brāhmana father had no issue, even the sons born from the śūdra wife were given considerable shares. In the case of a brāhmaṇa having sons from wives of all the four castes, Kauṭilya accepts the Dharmasūtra principle of division of shares.[1] He extends this even to the case of kṣatriya and vaiśya fathers begetting sons on the wives from three or two castes, in every case the śūdra son getting the smallest share.[2]

The question of the civic status of the śūdra *vis-a-vis* the position of slaves in the *Arthaśāstra* needs a careful examination. Like the authors of the Dharmasūtras, Kauṭilya clearly recognises an ārya as a free man, and states that on no account can an ārya be subjected to slavery.[3] As a corollary to this he ordains that the selling or mortgaging by kinsmen of a śūdra who is not a born slave, has not attained majority, but is an *āryaprāṇa* (ārya in birth), shall be punished with a fine of 12 paṇas, and that everybody engaged in the transaction shall be severely penalised.[4] This implies that sons of the three higher varṇas begotten on a śūdra woman,[5] cannot be reduced to slavery through the process of purchases or pledging: perhaps they might be relegated to that position through other processes such as judicial punishment, capture in war, voluntary enslavement etc.[6] Thus Kauṭilya refers to the *āryaprāṇa* captured in war being reduced to slavery.[7] Therefore his rule clearly shows that, with the exception of the minor śūdra sons of the members of the three varṇas, other members of the fourth varṇa could be made slaves. Even in the case of these specified śūdras, whose numbers must have been very small, the fine prescribed for making themselves is the smallest, i. e. 12 paṇas, which gradually increases in the cases of the vaiśya, the kṣatriya and the brāhmaṇa.[8]

1. *AŚ*. III. 6.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *AŚ*. III. 13.
4. *uttaradāsavaijamāryaprāṇamaprāptavyavahāraṃ śūdraṃ vikrayādhānaṃ nayatasvajanasya dvādaśapaṇo daṇḍaḥ. AŚ*, III. 13.
5. Cf. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 242.
6. Altogether nine sources of slavery are specified in the *AŚ* (III. 3). Other varieties also may have existed.
7. *AŚ*, III. 13.
8. *Ibid.*

But under certain special circumstances such as domestic distress or inability to pay fines or debts even the life of an ārya could be mortgaged.[1] So far as these mortgaged people (*āhitakas*) are concerned, Kauṭilya lays down a number of liberal rules. It is provided that his kinsman shall redeem the pledged person as soon as possible. He cannot be employed in impure work. If a pledged woman attends on her master while bathing naked, or if the master violates her chastity or abuses or hurts her,he shall not be entitled to the value of that woman, which will automatically secure her freedom. In the case of rape with a pledged young woman, the master shall not only forfeit the purchase value, but also pay a certain amount (śulka) to her and twice the amount (of the śulka) to the government. If the master has illicit connection with a pledged female slave working as a nurse, he shall be punished with the first amercement. In the same context it is stated that use of violence towards a high born attendant shall entitle him to run away.[2] This shows that the *āhitakas* also probably hailed from the higher varṇa. Unfortunately in the translation of the above passage Shama Sastry does not make any distinction between the *dāsa* and the *āhitaka*, and indiscriminately uses the word slave for both of them.[3] But that the *dāsas* and the *āhitakas* were two distinct categories ofemployees is clear from several statements of Kauṭilya. He prescribes that agreements entered into by the *dāsa* and the *āhitaka* should be declared void.[4] He also states that the king should see to it that people pay attention to the claims of their *dāsas* and *āhitakas*.[5] Kauṭilya further lays down that a woman who yields herself to a *dāsa*, a *paricāraka* (servant)or an *āhitaka* shall be put to death[6] In all these cases Shama Sastry recognises that the *āhitaka* is different from a *dāsa* and describes him as a pledged labourer or a

1. *a'ha vā'ryamādhāya kulabandhanatūryānāmāpadi niṣkrayaṃ cādhigamya bālaṃ sāhāyyadātāraṃ vā pūrvaṃ niṣkrīṇīran. AŚ*, III. 13.

2. *siddhamupacārakasyābhupajātasya apakramaṇam. AŚ*, III. 13.

3. *Tr.*, p. 206.

4. *AŚ*, III. 1.

5. *Ibid.*, II. 1.

6. *Ibid.*, IV. 13.

hireling.[1] Since in the chapter on the *dāsakarmakarakalpa* the *āhitakas* are confounded with the *dāsas*, the liberal rules applying to the former have been taken as applying to the *dāsas* as well.[2] But the above analysis would show that these rules of Kauṭilya apply to the pledged labourers, mostly women and presumably belonging to the āryan varnas. The above rules also imply that the ordinary dāsas could be assaulted, abused and employed in impure work by the master.

Several provisions of Kautilya regarding the emancipation of slaves seem to apply exclusively to the āryas reduced to servile status. It is enacted that the child of one who sells himself should be considered as an ārya (free).[3] A person can earn without prejudicing the work of his master, inherit his ancestral property and thus regain his āryahood (*āryatvam*) by paying his purchase value.[4] An *āryaprāṇa* who has been captured in war can secure his emancipation through the payment of ransom.[5] Failure to recognise a dāsa as an ārya on the receipt of proper ransom shall be punished with a fine of 12 paṇas.[6] In all such instances the question of regaining āryahood can arise only in the case of those who had it before and not in the case of the śūdras. At best the above provisions can apply to the sons of the three higher varṇas born from śūdra mothers.

Kautilya uses two terms to indicate the emancipation of servile people. In the case of the āryas the term *āryatvam* is used. But when the non-āryan slaves are to be freed, the term *adāsa* is used. For instance, it is laid down that, if the master begets a child on his female slave, the mother along with the child should be regarded as free.[7] If, for the sake of supporting her family, the mother decides to continue as a slave, her mother, brother and sister shall be liberated (*adāsāḥ syuḥ*).[8] It seems that these dāsas ceased to be slaves, but they

1. Tr. of *AŚ*, III. 1 and II. 1.
2. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 209.
3. *ātmavikrayiṇaḥ prajāmāryāṃ vidyāt*. *AŚ*, III. 13.
4. *AŚ*, III. 13.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *samāṛkam adāsaṃ vidyāt*· *AŚ*, III. 13.
8. *AŚ*, III. 13 after TGS.

could not become āryas. We may note that in the early Pāli texts the term used for the manumission of the slaves is *bhujjissa*,[1] and it is expressly stated that only among the Yavanas can an ārya become a dāsa and *vice versa*.

It is difficult to say whether the rule poviding for the emancipation through the payment of purchase value applied to the non-āryan slaves in the same way as it did to the āryan slaves. Perhaps even on payment the liberation of the śūdra slaves lay at the discretion of the master. But they were also sometimes emancipated, for it is laid down that selling or mortgaging the life of a male or female slave once liberated shall be punished with a fine of 12 paṇas, with the exception of those who enslave themselves.[2] It appears that even an ordinary slave could keep property of which he could not be deprived by his master.[3] This could naturally help him in securing his liberation.

Kautilya lays down some rules to regulate the treatment of slaves, which may have applied to the śūdra slaves as well as to those of higher varṇas. He directs that a slave who is less than eight years old and without relatives cannot be employed in mean avocations against his will, and cannot be sold or mortgaged in a foreign land.[4] Similarly a pregnant female slave cannot be sold or pledged without any provision for her confinement.[5] Again, the master cannot put his slave under confinement without any reason.[6] In the chapter on the *janapadaniveśa* it is enjoined that the king should compel the people to pay attention to the claims of their *dāsas* and *āhitakas*.[7] This sounds similar to the repeated instructions of Aśoka that slaves and servants should be treated kindly.[8]

But the liberal laws of Kauṭilya mostly cover the *āhitakas* and the ex-āryan slaves whose numbers must have been small ; only a few of these laws apply to the greater number of ordinary

1. *s. v.* bhujjissa, *Pali-Eng. Dict.*
2. *AŚ*, III. 13.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid*
7. *AŚ*, II. 1.
8. R.E. 9 (Girnār), l. 4; P.E. II (Girnār), l. 2.

slaves, who are evidently śūdras. Failure to see this point has led to the wrong inference that Kauṭilya's laws indirectly abolish slavery or that he introduced a policy of making his countrymen a nation of freemen.[1] His liberal laws mainly indicate his anxiety to protect the position of the ex-āryan slaves as distinguished from the non-āryan or śūdra slaves. This is natural, for Kauṭilya seems to draw a line between the śūdra and the members of the three upper varṇas in the laws relating toe vidence, adultery and inheritance.[2] Although Kautilya does not explicitly distinguish between an ārya and a śūdra as the Dharmasūtras do, he makes an unambiguous distinction between an *āryа* and an *avara* in matters of providing rations.[3] And there is no doubt that *avara* stands for śūdra.

The comparatively detailed laws of Kauṭilya regarding slavery, not to be found in the Dharmasūtras, show that there was a considerable number of slaves in Mauryan India. Quoting from Megasthenes Arrian states that none of the Indians employ slaves.[4] But this version is substantially modified by the account of Onesikritos, whom Strabo considers more reliable, for Strabo places Megasthenes among a set of liars.[5] Onesikritos states that the custom of not keeping slaves was peculiar to the people in the country of Mousikanos,[6] which included a large part of modern Sindh. According to him instead of slaves they employed young men in the flower of their age, as the Cretans employed the *aphamiotai*,[7] and the Lacedemonians the helots.[8] This suggests that even the Mousikanoi had a class of people who worked as the helots of society as a whole, not being owned individually. The practice bears out the brāhmaṇical theory that the śūdras are meant for serving the members of the three upper varṇas as slaves and hirelings.

1. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 209. B. N. Dutt, *Studies in Indian Social Polity*, pp. 184-187.
2. *Sutra*, pp. 161-2.
3. *AŚ*, II. 15. Cf. distinction between an *āryа* and a *nīca* in *AŚ*, I. 14.
4. McCrindle, *AIMA*, pp. 211-3, Frag. 10.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
6. McCrindle, *AICL*, p. 58, Strabo, Frag. 54.
7. Like helots, they were attached to the soil.
8. McCrindle, *AICL*, p. 41, Strabo, Frag. 34.

On the whole there is no indication of any fundamental change in the civic and political status of the śūdras in the Mauryan period. The politico-legal disabilities imposed on them during the pre-Mauryan period continued in the main. In the fourth pillar Edict Aśoka enjoins the rājuka to introduce *vyavahāra-samatā* and *daṇḍa-samatā* among the people of the *janapada* placed under his charge.[1] These two terms have been rendered as "impartiality in judicial proceedings" and "impartiality in punishments".[2] But, in the context of the old legal discriminations based on varṇa, the above terms perhaps indicate an attempt on the part of an idealist ruler to do away with such distinctions. In what ways and how far this policy actually operated is not known. Possibly in the face of the long standing prejudices such a measure was doomed to failure. Besides, since it was issued towards the end of his reign in 238 B.C.,[3] it may hardly have been long carried into effect before his death. Therefore this decree may have only served to arouse the brāhmaṇical hostility without achieving anything for the members of the lower orders.

As a work mainly concerned with the questions of economics and politics, the *Arthaśāstra* naturally does not supply as much information about the social conditions of the śūdras as the Dharmasūtras do. But it throws welcome light on the marriage practices of the śūdras and the position of their women. It informs us that, among the three higher varṇas, rejection of the bride before the rite of hand-taking (*pāṇigrahaṇa*) is valid, but among the śūdras this is valid before the time of cohabitation.[4] Again, it is said that divorce is not permissible in the case of the first four approved forms of marriage,[5] which implies that it is permissible in the case of the *gāndharva*, the *āsura*, the *rākṣasa* and

1. P. E. 4 (Delhi-Topra Inscription), l. 15.
2. *CII*, i, 125.
3. *Ibid.*, Introd., p. XXXVI.
4. *vivāhānāntu trayāṇāṁ pūrvesāṁ varnānāṁ pāṇigrahaṇāsiddhamupāvartanam śūdrāṇāṁ ca prakarmaṇām. AŚ*, III. 15. TSS has *prakarmaṇaḥ* (II, p. 92). He explains this as *yoniksatumavadhīkṛtya*, i.e. the loss of viginity of the girl. SS's translation of this term as 'nuptials' does not make sense. Meyer translates it as 'Beischlafung' (p. 296).
5. *AŚ*, III. 3.

the *paiśāca* forms of marriage. It has been shown earlier that the *gāndharva* and *paiśāca* forms of marriage prevailed among the vaiśyas and śūdras,[1] which would suggest that dissolution of the marriage tie was considered easier among them. Kautilya also states that while the approved forms of marriage require the consent of the father, the unapproved forms require the consent of the mother as well.[2] This indirectly suggests that the continuity of matriarchal elements among the people of lower orders lent some importance to their women.

The above provisions of Kauṭilya are not noticeable in the early Dharmasūtras. But Kauṭilya fixes practically the same waiting periods for the wives of the absent husbands of the different varṇas as is done by Vasiṣṭha, the shortest period being prescribed in the case of the wife of a śūdra.[3] All such injunctions show that the marriage tie was not considered so strong in the case of the śūdras as in the case of the members of the higher varṇas, among whom women were much more dependent upon man.

It has been suggested that Kauṭilya's provision fixing the age of sixteen for the bridegroom and twelve for the bride[4] was meant for the non-brāhmaṇa castes, especially the working class who desired early progeny.[5] Such an assumption is not at all warranted by the context in which the above provision occurs. On the other hand, in the absence of any references to the application of this measure to the lower varṇas, this provision may be taken to set the standard of conduct for the four varṇas in the order of their superiority.

Kauṭilya informs us that actors, players, singers, fishermen, hunters, herdsmen, wine distillers and vendors, and similar persons usually travel with their women.[6] This was not the case with the women of the higher varṇas, whose activities were

1. *Supra*, p. 116.
2. *AŚ*, III. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, III. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, III. 3.
5. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Indian Cameralism*, p. 66, fn. 5.
6. *tālāpacāraṇamatyabandhakalubdhakagopālakaśauṇḍikānāmanyeṣāṃ ca prasṛṣṭastrīkāṇāṃ pathyanusaraṇamadoṣaḥ. AŚ*, III. 4.

limited to the sphere of home. The outside life of the women of the śūdra varṇa was due to the necessity of working in the fields and pastures for the subsistence of their family. For Kauṭilya provides that wives of sharecroppers and herdsmen are responsible for the payment of debts incurred by their husbands.[1]

Normally the castes were endogamous during this period. Arrian informs us that the husbandman could not take a wife from the artisan class and *vice versa*.[2] But some marriages also took place between the members of the higher varṇas and the śūdras, as is evident from Kauṭilya's law of inheritance and his list of the mixed castes known as the *antarālas*. He repeats the brāhmanical theory of the origin of the niṣāda, the pāraśava, the caṇḍāla, the pulkasa, the śvapāka, the kṣattā, the āyogava, the kuṭaka (kukkuṭaka of the Dharmasūtras), the rathakāra, the vaiṇya etc.[3] Kauṭilya states that the function of the vaiṇya and the rathakāra are identical.[4] He further declares that members of these mixed castes should marry within their own castes.[5] The king should see to it that they follow their respective avocations.[6] He enjoins the king to recognise these orders and guide his subjects accordingly.[7] It is also laid down that among all the mixed castes there will be equal shares of inheritance.[8] According to him the mixed castes (*antarālas*), with the exception of the caṇḍālas, can live by the occupations of the śūdras.[9] Hence only the caṇḍālas are regarded as a despised caste, and the rathakāras, veṇas, pukkusas and nesādas of the Buddhist list are left out.

1. *strī vā pratiśrāviṇī patikṛtaṃ ṛṇam anyatra gopālakārdhasītikebhyaḥ. AŚ* III. 11.

2. *IA*, v, 92.

3. *AŚ*, III. 7. Kauṭilya introduces a new definition of the vrātyas, who, according to him, are sons begotten by impure men of any of the four castes on a woman of lower caste. *Ibid.*

4. *karmaṇā vaiṇyo rathakāraḥ. AŚ*, III. 7.

5. *Ibid.* This interpretation is on the basis of the construction of the passage according to TGS (ii, 44). SS gives a different construction, which suggests that marriage within the caste was confined only to the vaiṇyas.

6. *purvâvaragām'ścaṃ vṛttānuvṛttaṃ ca svadharmān sthāpayet. AŚ*, III. 7.

7. *AŚ*, III. 7.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *AŚ*, III. 7 after TGS, ii, 44.

It has been shown earlier that Pāṇini seems to have included the caṇḍālas in the śūdra varṇa. But Kauṭilya does not consider them as śūdras.[1] They have no place in the fourfold varṇa system. Thus, according to Kauṭilya, damage done to the animals and birds of the caṇḍālas and forest tribes should be punished with half the fine of that done to the similar possessions of the members of the four varṇas.[2] In addition to the four varṇas Kauṭilya mentions the caste of the *antāvasāyins*,[3] who seem to be identical with the caṇḍālas, for the latter lived outside villages near the burial grounds.[4] It is laid down that, if the caṇḍāla touches an ārya woman, a fine of a hundred paṇas shall be imposed on him.[5] This may imply that no such fine will be imposed if he touches a śūdra woman. Similarly the tank of water used by the caṇḍālas could not be used by anybody else.[6] So there is no doubt that the caṇḍālas continued to be regarded as untouchables. But the same cannot be said of the other mixed castes such as the pāraśavas and the niṣādas. For Kauṭilya provides for the share of the pāraśava son in the case of the brāhmaṇa father having no other issue.[7] The *Arthaśāstra* introduces us to a new avocation of the caṇḍāla. He is to be engaged in whipping a transgressing woman in the centre of the village.[8] He may be also asked to drag with a rope, along the public road, the bodies of such men and women as commit suicide by various methods.[9]

Kautilya furnishes some information about the religious conditions of the śūdras. He lays down that if a person entertains at a dinner dedicated to a god or ancestors such *vṛṣala* ascetics as the Buddhists and the Ājīvikas, a fine of hundred paṇas shall

1. *AŚ*, III. 7.
2. *caṇḍālāraṭyacarāṇāmardhadaṇḍāḥ*. *AŚ*, IV. 10.
3. *AŚ*, III. 18.
4. *AŚ*, II. 4.
5. *AŚ*, III. 20.
6. *AŚ*, I. 14.
7. *AŚ*, III. 6.
8. *AŚ*, III. 3. The caṇḍālas may have been specially chosen for the purpose because of the ferocity associated with these aboriginal peoples.
9. Read *rajjunā*. *AŚ*, IV. 7. SS translates *ghātayetsvayamātmānam* as "cause others to commit suicide", which does not seem to be correct.

be imposed on him.[1] Shama Sastry readers *vṛsala* as śūdra, but the passage does not actually refer to the śūdras but to the ascetics, who were branded indiscriminately as śūdras by brāhmanas. Nevertheless, the ascetics were respected by Aśoka without any consideration of caste. It is said that on one occasion when Aśoka was criticised for this by his minister, he replied that considerations of caste prevail in marriages and invitations and not in the observance of the dhamma.[2]

A provision of Kauṭilya envisages the possibility of admitting some śūdras to religious and educational facilities. While prescribing certain methods to test the character of the amātyas, he recommends a particular measure through which their temptation to disobey his orders on account of religious conviction is put to trial. The king should dismiss a priest, who, when ordered, refuses to teach the Veda to an undeserving person or to officiate in a sacrificial performance undertaken by a person who does not enjoy the right to sacrifice (*ayājyāyajanādhyāpane*).[3] The dismissed priest should try to mobilise the amātyas for the overthrow of the king on the ground of his being irreligious. If the amātyas do not succumb to this religious temptation, they should be considered pure.[4] In this passage the *ayājya* is described by the *Jayamaṅgalā* as the son of a śūdra woman (śūdrāputra).[5] Therefore the rule suggests the possibility of the śūdra sons of the higher varṇas performing sacrifice and taking to study if the king so desires, thereby indicating the absolute power of the ruler during the Mauryan period. But perhaps the normal position in this respect is suggested by another statement of Kauṭilya, who declares that sacrificial virtues fall in value when performed in the company of the husband of a śūdra woman;[6] so he instructs that such a priest should not be entertained.[7]

1. *AŚ*, III. 20.
2. Quoted in P. L. Narsu, *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 137.
3. *AŚ*, I. 10.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *JOR*, xxii, 32. TGS interprets *ayājya* as *vṛṣalīpati*, i.e., husband of a śūdra woman (1, 48).
6. *AŚ*, III. 14.
7. *alobhaḥ tyaktvamanyon am. Ibid.*

During the Mauryan period śūdras were employed by the state as slaves, labourers and artisans on a very large scale. In spite of the fixation of their wages the economic organization was showing signs of strain. Since sufficient dāsas and karmakaras were not forthcoming for agriculture carried on by the sate, it was found necessary to adopt the practice of leasing royal lands to sharecroppers, who presumably belonged to the lower orders. Secondly, by drafting śūdras from overpopulated areas, the state seems to have adopted the policy of opening up new lands, thus providing the landless śūdras with land. Politically and socially the śūdras continued to be subject to the old discriminations, although Kauṭilya seems to have made a number of concessions in the case of the śūdra sons of the people of the higher varṇas. They could not be reduced to slavery, could have share in the paternal property[1], and under special circumstances could enjoy the right to Vedic sacrifice and education. But the larger body of the śūdras continued to suffer from the old disabilities.

The *Arthaśāstra* gives us some idea about the general conduct of the lower orders, which shows that they were not altogether happy about the conditions in which they lived. Kauṭilya's list of offenders and suspects includes many of those whose castes and avocations were held low in society (*hīnakarmajātim*). They were suspected of being murderers, robbers or people guilty of misappropriation of treasures and deposits.[2] Kauṭilya says that, in the case of thefts and burglaries, poor women and servants of condemnable nature should be also examined.[3] He further provides that, if the master is murdered, his servants should be examined as to whether they had received any violent and cruel treatment at his hands.[4] This shows that at times domestic servants might make fatal attempts at the life of their masters. Kauṭilya also ordains that when a śūdra calls himself a brāhmaṇa, steals the property of gods, or is hostile to the king, either his eyes shall be destroyed by the application

1. This was limited to the rathakāra and the pāraśava.
2. *AŚ*, IV. 6.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *dagdhasya hṛdayamadagdham dṛṣṭā vā tasya paricārakajanam tā daṇḍapāruṣyādatimārgeṭ. AŚ*, IV. 7.

of poisonous ointment or he shall have to pay a fine of 800 paṇas.[1] This indicates the hostility of some śūdras to the priestly and royal powers. There is also a reference to the seditious activities of the pāraśava. His anti-state activities are to be countered by the same measure as those used against a seditious minister. It is provided that the king should employ his spies in fomenting quarrels in the family of the suspect, leading to his ultimate execution by the government.[2] The above references show that members of the śūdra varṇa were not happily disposed towards their masters. Since there were no peaceful channels into which their reaction could canalise itself, it occasionally found expression through criminal activities such as robberies, burglaries, theft of temple property, murder of the master, attack on the pretension of the brāhmaṇas and seditions against the head of the state. These actions seem to be symptomic of the discontent that prevailed among them. But there is no evidence of any organised revolt on their part. In this respect conditions during the Mauryan period were probably somewhat better than they had been in the earlier period. The *Arthaśāstra* does not contain any special provision to meet organised revolts on the part of the śūdras, such as can be inferred from some passages of the Dharmasūtras. On the other hand Kauṭilya's readiness to enrol śūdras in the army, though perhaps not put into practice, indicates a sense of confidence which was born of his twofold policy of conciliation and ruthless control.

1. *Śūdrasya brāhmaṇavādino devadravyamavastṛnato rājadviṣṭamādiśato dvinetrabhedinaśca yogāñjanenāndhatvamaṣṭaśato vā daṇḍaḥ. AŚ*, IV. 10. There does not seem to be any justification for regarding the *brāhmaṇavādī śūdra* as distinct from the person who steals the property of god or is hostile to the king, as SS has done in the translation of this passage (Tr., p. 255).

2. *AŚ*, V. 1 based on the commentary of TGS.

CHAPTER VI

WEAKENING OF THE OLD ORDER

(*circa* 200 B. C. — *circa* A. D. 200)

Most of our direct information about the position of the śūdras during this period is derived from the law-book of Manu, which is generally ascribed to the period 200 B. C. — A. D. 200.[1] Manu looks upon Brahmāvarta (the country between the Sarasvatī and the Dṛṣadvatī[2] and Brahmarṣideśa (the plains of the Kurus, the Matsyas, the Pañcālas and the Śūrasenas) as sacred.[3] On this basis it has been suggested that the law-book arose, and was first considered authoritative within this comparatively narrow province.[4] Such a view, though possible, is by no means necessary, and the influence of the code of Manu may have extended over a much wider area.

The extreme form of brāhmaṇical fanaticism displayed by Manu makes it difficult to evaluate the evidence furnished by his work. But his passage bearing on the position of the śūdras can be scrutinised in the light of information gleaned from the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali, the dramas of Bhāsa[5] and the Buddhist works such as the *Questions of Milinda*, the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Mahāvastu* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.[6] A Jain work known as the *Pannavaṇā*, which supplies valuable information

1. Bühler, *SBE*, xxv, Introd., pp. CXIV-CXVIII ; cf. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, pp. 25-32 ; Kane, *Hist. Dh.S.*, ii, p. XI. Ketkar's argument that the work belongs to A. D. 272-320 (*History of Caste*, p. 66) does not seem to be convincing.

2. *Manu*, II. 17.

3. *Ibid.*, II. 19.

4. Johäntgen quoted in Hopkins, *Relations of Four Castes in Manu*. pp. 4-5

5. The extreme view assigning Bhāsa's to the 5th or the 4th cen B. C, is not generally accepted. Bhāsa's date may be placed in the second or third cen, A. D. (*The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 261).

6. Since the earliest Chinese translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* took place in the 3rd cen. A.D. (*SBE*, xxi, Introd., p. XXI), the original composition may be assigned to the 2nd or even the first cen. A. D. (N. Dutt, *Saddharma puṇḍarīka*, Introd., p. XVII).

about artisans, may be also ascribed to this period.[1] Memorial and votive inscriptions of this period also throw welcome sidelights on the position of the śūdra community.

The descriptions of the Kali age in several early Purāṇas perhaps allude to this age[2] when the varṇa divided brāhmaṇical society was undermined by the activities of heretical sects and the incursions of foreign elements such as the Bactrian Greeks, Śakas, Parthians and Kuṣāṇas. Partly as a reaction to the pro-Buddhist policy of Aśoka, and partly because of the advent of these new peoples, Manu desperately tries to preserve brāhmaṇical society, not only by ordaining rigorous measures against the śūdras, but also by inventing suitable geneologies for the incorporation of foreign elements into varṇa society. Moreover, his undue glorification of the power of the sword (daṇḍa)[3] is also meant to serve that end.

Manu reaffirms the old theory that the śūdra is ordained by God to serve the higher castes.[4] The king should order a vaiśya to trade, to lend money, to cultivate the land or to tend cattle, and a śūdra to serve the three upper varṇas.[5] But in the chapter on times of distress (*āpad-dharma*) Manu declared that a śūdra should serve the brāhmaṇa, which would secure him all his ends ;[6] failing that,he may serve a ksatriya, or may maintain himself by attending even on a wealthy vaiśya.[7] In this connection the phrase *api* (even) should be particularly noted, since it seems to imply that the vaiśya was seldom the master of the śūdra.[8] This further suggests that in times of distress the service of the śūdra was to be mainly reserved for the brāhmaṇas and ksatriyas. At another place Manu ordains that the king should

1. Jain, *Life as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 38 The book mentions Śakas, Yavanas, Murundas, Pahlavas etc. (1. 58), which seems to make it a work of the post-Mauryan period.

2. Hazra, *Studies in the Purānic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, pp. 208-10.

3. *Manu*, VII. 13-30.

4. *Ibid*, I. 91.

5. *Ibid.*, VIII. 410.

6. *Ibid.*, X. 123 ; cf. IX. 334.

7. *dhanuṣaṃ vāpy upārādhya vaiśyaṃ śūdro jijīviṣet... Ibid.*, X. 121-2.

8. Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

carefully compel the vaiśyas and the śūdras to perform the tasks assigned to them ; since, if these two varṇas swerve from their duties, they will throw the whole world into confusion.[1] This passage is of particular importance, for it is not to be found in any earlier text Such a measure seems to reflect a period of socio-economic crisis, which is also evident from the *Yuga Purāṇa*, which informs us that during this period even women took to ploughing.[2] That there seems to have been decaying farmers and traders, who were recruited as spies by the king, can be inferred from the comment of Kullūka to a passage of Manu.[3] Another rule of Manu that the śūdras distressed for subsistence may settle down in any part of the country[4] (i. e. even in the land of the Mlecchas) also points to some kind of crisis, which deeply affected the producing masses. Hence Manu's measure for making the vaiśyas and śūdras work may have been necessitated by social convulsions made worse by foreign invasions. Perhaps, when the strong rule of the Mauryans broke down, it was found increasingly difficult to keep the vaiśyas and the śūdras within the bounds of their assigned duties.

The above references also show that distinctions between the functions of the vaiśyas and the śūdras were being gradually obliterated. Manu lays down that, if in times of distress the vaiśya finds it difficult to support himself by his own occupations, he should take to the occupations of the śūdras, i.e. live by serving the members of the twice-born caste.[5] This is also supported by a passage of the *Questions of Milinda*, where cultivation, trade and tending of cattle are described as the functions of the ordinary folk such as the vaiśyas and the śūdras,[6] there being no separate mention of the functions of these two classes.

1. *Manu*, VIII. 418.
2. *Yuga Purāna*, 167.
3. Kullūka interprets the term *pañcavargam* in *Manu*, VII. 154 as five classes of spies, including *karsakah kṣiṇavṛttih* and *vāṇijakah kṣiṇavṛttiḥ*. Hopkins takes the word in the sense of minister, realm, city, wealth and army (*op. cit*, p. 69), but there does not seem to be any justification for taking the *pañcavarga* in the sense of the five elements of the state, which are generally enumerated as seven.
4. II. 24.
5. *Manu*, X. 98.
6. *avasesānaṃ puthuvessasuddānaṃ kasivaṇijjā gorakkhā karaṇīyā. Milinda*, p. 178.

In spite of the tendency to approximate the vaiśya to the śūdra, there is no evidence of the existence of independent śūdra peasants. Generally they continued to be employed as hired labourers and slaves, for Manu repeats the old rule that, instead of paying taxes, artisans, mechanics and śūdras who subsist by manual labour should work for one day per month for the king.[1] He lays down a new provision that the vaiśyas should meet times of emergency by paying $\frac{1}{8}$ of their corn as tax and the śūdras by their manual labour.[2] In this connection Kullūka states emphatically that even in bad times taxes should not be imposed on the śūdras.[3] Manu's exemption of śūdras from taxes is corroborated by the *Milinda-pañha*. It informs us that every village had its slaves, male and female, wage earners (bhatakas) and hired labourers (karmakaras), who were exempted from taxes.[4] Therefore, unlike the vaiśyas, the śūdras do not appear as peasants paying taxes to the state. While enumerating the eight-fold functions (*aṣṭavidhaṃ karma*) of the king Medhātithi mentions trade, agriculture, irrigation, digging mines, settling uninhabited districts, cutting forests, etc.[5] But there is no evidence of dāsas and karmakaras being employed in agriculture by the state, as we find in the Mauryan period. The *Mahāvastu* describes a village headman as hurrying out of the village to inspect the work in the fields, but we do not know whether he did this on behalf of the king.[6] It seems that śūdras were mostly employed as agricultural workers by individual proprietors. Patañjali refers to the landowner sitting in a corner and supervising the ploughing done by five hired labourers.[7] Manu also speaks of the servants of the peasant proprietors.[8] According to him the cultivator should form an item in the additional portion to

1. *Manu*, VII. 138.
2. *Ibid.*, X. 120.
3. *na tu tebhya āpadyapi karo grāhyaḥ*. Comm. to *Manu*, X. 120.
4. *Milinda*, p. 147.
5. Comm. to *Manu*, VII. 154. Hopkins thinks that the *aṣṭavidhaṃ karma* reminds one of the seven elements of the state (*op., cit.*, pp. 70-71), but there is no similarity between the *aṣṭavidha karma* and the *saptāṅga*.
6. i, 301.
7. *Mahābhāṣya*, ii, 33.
8. ...*bhṛtyānāmajñānāṅkṣetrikasya tu*. *Manu*, VIII. 243.

be given to the brāhmaṇa son in the partition of family property.[1] This obviously refers to agricultural labourers owned by the brāhmaṇas.

Although the view recurs in Manu that śūdras should take to the occupations of artisans only if they fail to secure livelihood through direct service of the upper varṇas,[2] there seems to have been not only considerable increase in the number of artisans but some improvement in their conditions during this period. This is evident from a large number of recorded gifts of caves, pillars, tablets, cisterns etc. to the Buddhist monks by smiths, perfumers, weavers, goldsmiths and even leather workers.[3] Besides these, dyers, workers in metal and ivory, jewellers, sculptors and fishermen figure as donors in the inscriptions.[4] Perfumers, and to a lesser degree, smiths are repeatedly mentioned as liberal votaries, and therefore seem to have formed the well-to-do and perhaps numerous sections of artisans. Although weavers do not appear as donors as often as perfumers, the evidence from Manu suggests that they were an important class of artisans ; for it is laid down that they should pay 11 *palas*, and in the case of failure 12 *palas*.[5] These apparently were taxes in kind levied on the produce of the weavers, who probably owed their affluence to trade in textiles produced in Mathurā[6] and other cities. Most of the artisans known from inscriptions were confined to the Mathurā region, and to the western Deccan where their prosperity was stimulated by the growing trade with Rome.

The epigraphic evidence shows that the artisans were organnised under their headmen, who probably enjoyed the favour of the king. Thus we hear of the gift of Ānanda who was the foreman of the artisans of Śrī Śātakarṇi.[7] But the literary evidence

1. *Manu*, IX. 150.
2. *Ibid.*, X. 99 and 100.
3. *Luder's List*, Nos. 53, 54, 68, 76, 95, 331, 345, 381, 495, 857, 986, 1006, 1032, 1051, 1061, 1177, 1203-4, 1210, 1230, 1273, 1298 ; cf, *IC*, xii, 83-85.
4. *Ibid.*, Nos. 32, 53-4, 345, 857, 1005, 1092, 1129.
5. Quoted from *Vyakhyāsaṃgraha*, steyaprakaraṇa, pp. 1727-8 in *Dharmakośa*, i, pt. III, p. 1927.
6. *Mahābhaṣya*, i. 19.
7. *Luder's List*, No. 346.

suggests that guilds of artisans flourished on a far larger scale during this period than in earlier times. At one place the *Mahāvastu* mentions eleven kinds of artisans such as garland makers, potters, carpenters, washermen, dyers, makers of bowls, goldsmiths, jewellers, workers in conch shell, armourers and cooks, all working under their respective heads.[1] The same source also refers to the eighteen guilds (*aṣṭadaśa śreṇis*) of Rājagaha including, goldsmiths, perfumers, gemcutters, oilmen, makers of flour, etc. The list also includes vendors of fruits, roots, flour, and sugar.[2] Goldsmiths and workers in gems are common to both the lists ; yet there seem to have existed about two dozen guilds of artisans during this period.[3] It is to be also noted that the second list of guilds is quite different from that mentioned in the Jātakas.[4] Although artisans were employed by the king,[5] increase in the number of guilds may have weakened the direct control of the state over artisans. What is more significant, we do not come across so many kinds of artisans even in the *Arthaśāstra*, as we find during this period. The *Mahāvastu* gives a list of thirty-six kinds of workers living in the town of Rājagaha.[6] The list does not seem to be exhaustive, for it is said at the end of it that there are others besides those mentioned.[7] A still longer list is to be found in the *Milinda-pañha*, which enumerates as many as seventy-five occupations, mostly of artisans.[8] Many artisans of the Buddhist lists also recur in a Jain work, which enumerates eighteen kinds of craftsmen and significantly describes even the tailors, weavers and silk weavers as āryans by craft,[9] showing thereby that these crafts were not held in low esteem by the Jains.

An analysis of the lists of these artisans would show that there arose a number of new crafts during this period. As

1. ii, 463-78.
2. *Mahāvastu*, iii, 442 ff.
3. Computed on the basis of *Mahāvastu*, ii, 463-78 and iii, 442ff. Many of these artisans were also small traders.
4. *IC*, xiv, 31-32.
5. Pat. on *Pā.*, II. 1. 1.
6. iii, 442-3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Milinda*, p. 331.
9. *Pannavaṇā*, i, 61.

against about two dozen trades in the *Digha Nikāya*[1] we meet about five dozen trades in the *Milinda-pañha*. Of these eight crafts are associated with metal working,[2] which shows considerable advance. Occupations connected with cloth making, silk weaving,[3] making of arms and luxury articles,[4] also seem to have made progress. All this shows that artisans of this period made a significant contribution to technological and economic developments.

These artisans were not attached to their clients in the same way as the dāsas and the karmakaras were attached to their masters. Thus Patañjali informs us that the weaver was an independent worker.[5] While the dāsās and the karmakaras worked in the hope of getting clothes and food, the artisans worked in the hope of getting wages.[6]

Manu lays down a number of laws which affect the economic position of the śūdras adversely. Thus he introduces rates of interest differeing according to varṇa.[7] The monthly interest charged should be two, three, four or five per cent according to the order of the varṇas.[8] But probably this law did not work in practice. According to a Nāsik Inscription when money was deposited with a weavers' guild, the rate of interest paid by them amounted to from 1 to $\frac{3}{4}$ percent per month.[9] There is nothing to show that as śūdras they had to pay the highest rate of interest. A modern apologist has tried to justify this gradation of interest on the ground that it is in proportion to the social services of the borrowers,[10] which implies that the

1. *Digha N.*, II, 50.

2. *suvanna-, sajjha-, sīsa-, tipu-, loha-, vaṭṭa-, aya-, maṇi-kāra. Milinda*, p. 331.

3. *Paṇṇavaṇā*, i, 61.

4. *Milinda*, p. 331.

5. Pat. on *Pā.*, I. 4.54.

6. *tathā jadetaddāsakarmakaraṃ nāmeta 'pi svabhūtyarthameva pravartante bhaktaṃ celaṃ ca lapsyāmahe.* Pat. on *Pā.*, III. 1. 26.

7. A similar rule occuring in *Vas. Dh. S.*, II. 48 seems to be an interpolation, for it is not found in the three other Dharmasūtras.

8. *Manu*, VIII. 142. According to Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita and the commentators on the parallel passage of *Viṣṇu* (VI. 2), *Manu* and other Smṛtis, this rule applies only to loans for which no security is given. *SBE*, xiv, 15.

9. *Lüder's List*, No. 1133.

10. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Aspects of the Pol. and Soc. System of Manu*, p. 148.

services rendered by the śūdras were negligible when in fact, along with the vaiśyas, they sustained the entire social fabric by their producing activities. Although Manu's law regarding interest may not have worked in practice, in the charging of interest probably the brāhmaṇas were shown some consideration while the śūdras were made to work off their debts.

Manu lays down that a śūdra should not be permitted to accumulate wealth, for he gives pain to the brāhmaṇas.[1] It is suggested that this injunction is an exaggerated statement (*arthavāda*) addressed to the śūdra himself,[2] but the text does not provide any basis for such an interpretation. The injunction is also compared to an admonition in the English prayer-book advising a poor man "therewith to be contented".[3] Since the passage in question occurs in the chapter on times of distress, it may have been directed against the Buddhist monks or foreign rulers who were looked upon as no better than śūdras. At any rate it is evident from the law of inheritance that the śūdra owned property.[4] This can also be inferred from the old rule repeated by Manu that vaiśyas and śūdras should surmount their misfortunes through payment.[5]

According to Manu, one of the qualifications of the person with whom money should be deposited is that he should be an ārya.[6] This naturally excludes the śūdras. But in the second century A. D. in the Sātavāhana territory money was deposited with the potters, the oil millers[7] and even the weavers.[8] This practice prevailed among the lay devotees of Buddhism, who made such deposits for the purpose of providing robes and other necessities for the monks. But the orthodox also followed such practices, for we have a record which shows that during the reign of Huviska (*circa* A. D. 106—138) a sum of money was deposited by a chief with the guild of flour makers at Mathurā, out of the

1. *Manu*, X. 129.
2. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Dharmaśāstra*, p. 120.
3. Ketakar, *History of Caste*, p. 98.
4. *Manu*, IX. 157.
5. *Ibid.*, XI. 34.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII. 179.
7. *Lüder's List*, No. 1137.
8. *Ibid.*, No. 1193.

monthly interest of which a hundred brāhmanas were to be served daily.[1] These practices provide further evidence of the independent functioning of craftsmen organised in guilds. Evidently they could purchase their raw materials and implements with money deposited with them, and could pay interest on it out of the proceeds from the sale of their commodities.

Manu lays down that the brahmaṇa can confidently seize the goods of his śūdra slave, for he is not allowed to own any property.[2] Jayaswal thinks that this probably legalises seizure of property of the Buddhist Saṃgha which had become enormously rich.[3] But perhaps the rule applies only to those śūdras who work as slaves. In Manu's opinion, even when starving, a kṣatriya can never seize the possessions of a virtuous brāhmaṇa, but he can appropriate the possessions of a dasyu or of one who neglects his sacred duties.[4] This suggests that the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas who neglected their essential rites could be subjected to such expropriation. In such a case the śūdras cannot be considered to be safe. For Manu provides that as the śūdra has nothing to do with the sacrifice, the sacrificer of the twice-born caste may take from him two or three articles required for it.[5] All these rules show a definite attempt on the part of Manu to keep down the śūdras economically.

We can obtain some idea about the wages of the workers and the general living conditions of the lower orders during the post-Mauryan period. In one respect, Manu follows the principle of Kauṭilya and states that a hired herdsman may milk with the consent of the owner the best cow out of ten.[6] In this case Manu seems to be more generous towards the hired labourer than Kauṭilya[7], for he permits the labourer to milk the best cow. The responsibility of the herdsmen for the cattle under their charge is emphasised also by Manu, who enumerates their

1. *EI*, xxi, Inscr. No. 10. The term used is *samitakaraśreṇi* (*Ibid.*, l.12).
2. *Manu*, VIII.417.
3. *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 171.
4. *Manu*, XI. 18.
5. *Ibid.*, XI. 13.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII. 231.
7. Kauṭilya only specifices 1/10 of milk as the share of a herdsman, but does not state that he should milk the best cow.

functions under various circumstances[1] But in the case of loss of cattle he does not provide for the flogging of the herdsmen, as is done by Āpastamba, or for his death, as is done by Kauṭilya. Manu introduces a new provision, according to which an area of about 400 cubits in width round the villages, and thrice as much around the towns, are to be set apart as pasture ground. And if the cattle stray into the unfenced plots of anyone in this area and destroy his standing crops, the herdsman cannot be held answerable for this.[2] Thus to some extent this lawgiver safeguards the interests of the herdsmen.

While stating that the śūdras are meant for serving the brāhmaṇas, he lays down that in fixing maintenance for them regard should be paid to their ability, work, and the number of people they have to support.[3] He repeats the instruction of Gautama that these servants should be given leavings from the table, old clothes and beds, but adds that they should also be given the refuge of grain.[4] These rules obviously refer to the remuneration of those śūdras who served as domestic servants. Manu further states that the wages of those employed in the service of the king—maids and servants—should be fixed according to the considerations of time and place.[5] These workers, high (*utakṛṣṭa*) and low (*apakṛṣṭa*), should get the daily wages varying from one paṇa to six paṇas.[6] Besides, they should get provisions such as food, clothes etc. differing according to respective status.[7] It is not clear whether the terms *utkṛṣṭa* and *apakṛṣṭa* refer to high and low varṇas, as they are interpreted in another context.[8] But we learn from Patañjali that there was a wide difference between the wages of the karmakaras and the bhṛtakas on the one hand and those of the priests on the other. Thus, while the latter received cows as their wages, the former received only

1. VIII. 229-44.
2. VIII.237-8.
3. X. 124.
4. X. 125.
5. VII.125.
6. VII. 126.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Infra*, p. 191-2.

of a *niṣka* daily,[1] i.e. $7\frac{1}{2}$ niṣkas per month. It is suggested that the niska is identical with the kārṣāpaṇa.[2] But if this proposition is accepted the daily wage of a worker will come to $\frac{1}{4}$ pana, while the nearly contemporary evidence of Manu indicates that the minimum wage of a labourer amounted to one pana, the maximum being six panas. In the *Arthaśāstra* the daily wage of a worker varies from $\frac{1}{5}$ paṇa to $2\frac{2}{5}$ pana, i.e. one to four times[3], but we have no means of estimating the relative purchasing power of the paṇa known from these sources.

Manu's provisions regulating the working conditions of the labourers are not so detailed as those of Kauṭilya. But, like Kautilya, he is severe towards a negligent workman. A hired workman who fails to perform his work according to the agreement out of pride, without being ill, shall be fined eight kṛṣṇalas, and no wages shall be paid to him.[4] Nevertheless, the worker who fails to do his work on account of illness but completes it on his recovery shall be paid his wages for the long period of absence.[5] On the other hand, if he does not complete his work when he has recovered, he shall not be paid any wages even for the period he has worked.[6] This would suggest that workers were not penalised if they had to abandon work on account of illness, provided they undertook to finish the work on their recuperation or arranged to get it done by others. Manu does not make any further corresponding provision protecting the interests of the labourer as against the employer, such as we find in the *Arthaśāstra*. From a simile used by him it appears that the servant had to wait patiently for the payment of his wages.[7]

There seems to have been separate streets of the wage-earners in towns. A Buddhist source speaks of the *bhṛtakavīthī*, presumably in Rājagṛha, where the brāhmaṇas and householders (probably vaiśyas) went to hire labourers.[8] Another source

1. Pat. on *Pā.*, I. 3.72.
2. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, pp. 236-7.
3. *Supra*, p. 155.
4. *Manu*, VIII. 215
5. *Ibid*, VIII. 216.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII. 217.
7. *Ibid.*, VI. 145.
8. *Divya*, p. 304.

draws a contrast between the street of the poor (*daridravīthī*) and the luxurious house of a rich man in a town.[1] Possibly this *daridravīthī* was identical with the *bhṛtakavīthī* and was inhabited by poor people who lived on wages. We also learn about three *bhṛtakas* ,who cleared dirt near a rich man's house and lived in its vicinity in a hovel of straw.[2] Patañjali repeatedly states that the house of a vṛṣala, i.e. a śūdra, is reduced merely to a wall (*kuḍya*).[3] This suggests that presumably it had an earthen or brick wall and the other three sides were enclosed by straw. It is also possible that the term *kuḍya*[4] here indicates a hut.

The *bhṛtaka* was distinguished by his lacerated body, dishevelled hair and dirty clothes,[5] for a well dressed person could not find employment in the *bhṛtakavīthī*, although he waited there for the whole day.[6] Manu gives some idea of the food and dress of the śūdras who were employed as domestic servants. In this respect he merely repeats and to some extent elaborates the old provision of Gautama. A śūdra servant should be allotted by his master a suitable maintenance commensurate with his ability, industry and the size of his family.[7] He should be given remnants of food, refuse of grain, worn out clothes and old beds.[8] In the *Milinda-pañha* tender wives of kṣatriyas, brāhmaṇas and gahapatis are described as eating tasteful cakes and meat,[9] but there is no mention of the wives of śūdras in this connection.

During the post-Mauryan period the economic distinctions between the śūdras and the vaiśyas were tending to become blurred. But the śūdras chiefly continued as agricultural workers employed by individual landowners. Artisans seem

1. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Ch. IV, p. 76.

2. *...kaṭapalikuñcikāyām. Ibid.*, IV. p. 78. *SBE* II. of the phrase seems to be correct. It does not occur in Edgerton's *BHS Dictionary*.

3. *kuḍyībhūtaṃ vṛṣalakulamiti.* Pat. on *Pā.*, I. 2.47 & VI. 3.61.

4. *kuḍi* is a wrong reading for *kuṭi* (*s. v.* Monier-Williams, *Sansk-Eng. Dict.*), and *kuḍyī* may be a form of *kuḍī*.

5. *sphaṭitaṭuruṣā rūkṣakeśā malinavastrānivasanāḥ. Divya.*, p. 304. Edgerton doubts the correctness of *puruṣā* and suggests *parusā* (?) in its place (*s. v.* sphaṭita, *BHS Dict.*), but the existing reading gives a better sense.

6. *Divya.*, p. 304.
7. *Manu*, X. 124.
8. *Ibid.*, X. 125. Cf. V. 140.
9. *Milinda*, p. 68.

to have functioned more independently than in the earlier period. They increased not only in number and variety but also showed signs of prosperity. Manu's laws imposing new economic disabilities on the śūdras were probably ineffective. But there is no indication of any change in the living conditions of the main body of the śūdras.

Manu supplies considerable information about the position of the śūdras in post-Mauryan polity. He lays down that a snātaka should not dwell in the country of a śūdra ruler.[1] This apparently points to the existence of śūdra rulers during this period. But they do not seem to have arisen from the fourth varṇa, for contemporary political history does not know of such rulers. They probably refer to the Greek, Śaka, Parthian and Kusāṇa rulers, who were affiliated to Buddhism or Vaiṣṇavism, and whom Manu describes as degraded ksatriyas reduced to to śūdrahood on account of their failure to consult brāhamaṇas and to perform enjoined Vedic rites.[2] The Purāṇic descriptions of the Kali age speak of the śūdra kings performing the *aśvamedha* sacrifice[3] and employing brāhmana priests.[4] While referring to the Kali rulers, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that the people of various countries will intermingle with them and follow their examples.[5] This seems to refer to the rulers of foreign extraction. They were the followers of heretical sects[6], which further aroused Manu's hostility towards them. It is in order to prevent contact between brāhmaṇas and these rulers that Manu forbids the snātakas to dwell in their kingdoms. He further prescribes that brāhmaṇas should not accept presents from a king who is not descended from the kṣatriya race.[7] All these rules are obviously meant to prevent the recognition of foreign rulers by

1. *na śūdrarājye nivaset. Manu*, IV. 61.

2. *vṛṣalatvaṃ gatā loke... Manu*, X. 43-44.

3. *Mat. P.*, 144. 43a ; *Brahmāṇḍa, P.*, ii. 31. 67b ; *Vā. P.*, 58. 67a wrongly reads '*nāśvamedhena*' for '*cāśvamedhena*' of the *Brahmāṇḍa* (Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 206, fn. 59).

4. *Kūrma P.*, Ch. 30, p. 304.

5. *Viṣṇu P.*, IV. 24. 19.

6. *rājānaḥ śūdrabhūyiṣṭhāḥ pākhaṇḍānāṃ pravarttakāḥ. Brahmāṇḍa P.*, ii, 31. 41.

7. *Manu*, V.84.

by the brāhmaṇas. But gradually this open hostility gave way to tolerance and ultimate recognition of the alien rulers as kṣatriyas, though of an inferior kind.

During this period some Buddhists also do not favour rulers from low castes. The *Milinda-pañha* states that a person who is low born and base in lineage is not fit for kingship.[1]

Manu lays down that the king should appoint seven or eight ministers whose ancestors have been royal officers, who are skilled in the use of weapons, descended from noble families and are men of experience.[2] It is obvious that the śūdras could be hardly expected to fulfil these qualifications.

Manu warns that the kingdom of that monarch who looks on, while a śūdra settles the law, will sink low like a cow in morass.[3] Such a rule perhaps again refers to the kingdoms of the barbarian rulers, who may have appointed some śūdras to carry on the administration of justice or to perform other administrative functions. But Manu emphatically states that even a brāhmaṇa who subsists mainly by the name of his caste (i.e. merely by calling himself a brāhmaṇa) can interpret the law, but a śūdra can never be appointed as a judge (*dharma-pravaktā*).[4] The commentators add that kṣatriyas might be employed in cases of necessity,[5] but they do not mention vaiśyas. This fits in with the scheme of Manu, in which kṣatriyas cannot prosper without brāhmaṇas and *vice-versa*, but closely united they prosper in this world and in the next.[6] Probably in brāhmaṇical kingdoms the first two varṇas monopolised all administrative and judicial posts.

Manu repeats the old principle that members of the four varṇas and the untouchables can act as witnesses in the transactions of their respective communities.[7] But he adds that kṣatriyas, vaiśyas or śūdras, provided they are householders,

1. *Milinda*, p 358.
2. *Manu*, VII. 54.
3. *Ibid.*, VII. 21.
4. *Ibid*, VIII. 20.
5. Kullūka, Rāghavānanda and Nandana on *Manu*, VIII. 20.
6. *Manu*, IX. 322.
7. *Ibid.*, VIII. 68.

have sons and are indigenous, are competent to give evidence when called by a suitor.[1] In the opinion of Kullūka this applies to civil cases such as debts etc.[2] This provision of Manu makes a definite advance on the provisions of earlier times which do not permit the śūdras to appear as witnesses in the cases of the members of the higher varnas. As to cases such as defamation, assault, adultery and theft, anybody can be called as a witness irrespective of the qualifications required in civil cases.[3] If qualified witnesses are not available, Manu permits even slaves and servants to act as witness.[4] Manu does not introduce any varṇa distinctions in boundary disputes between villages; witnesses are to be examined in the presence of the crowd of villagers.[5] Amongst those whom Manu does not permit to appear as witnesses (evidently in civil cases) are artisans, actors and dancers.[6] Kullūka justifies this on the ground that these people are always occupied with their work and that they can be won over by bribery.[7] Born slaves are also not permitted to act as witnesses.[8]

Manu repeats the old rule of giving warning to the members of the various varṇas before making depositions.[9] If a śūdra gives false evidence, he is held guitly of all sins,[10]and is threatened with the most terrible spiritual consequences.[11] But he adds that a judge should cause a brāhmaṇa to swear by his veracity, a kṣatriya by his chariot or the animal he rides on, a vaiśya by his kine, grain and gold, and a śūdra by imprecating on his head the guilt of all grievous sins.[12] Significantly, however, Manu

1. *Manu*, VIII. 62.
2. Kull. on *Manu*, VIII. 62.
3. *Manu*, VIII. 62 and 69 with the comm. of Kull.
4. *Ibid.*, VIII. 70.
5. *Ibid.*, VIII. 254.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII. 65.
7. Kull. on *Manu*, VIII. 65.
8. *Manu*, VIII. 66 with the comm of Kull; *adhyadhina* is explained as a *garbhadāsa* (*Ibid.*).
9. *Ibid.*, VIII 88.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Possibly a whole series of exhortations made by the judge in *Manu*, VIII. 89-101 are addressed to the śūdra witness.
12. *Manu*, VIII. 113.

does not ordain any special royal punishment for the śūdra witness. He states the general principle that, in the case of giving false evidence, the king should fine and banish men of the three lower castes, but should only banish a brāhmaṇa.[1] Similarly, according to Manu, brāhmaṇas are not liable to corporal punishments, which can be inflicted only on the members of the three lower castes.[2] Therefore in these respects the śūdra is placed on a footing of equality with the kṣatriya and the vaiśya.

It is laid down that the king should take up the cases of the litigants in the order of their varṇas.[3] In settling the law he should take into account the customs of every caste.[4] Conduct of good people is regarded as a source of law by Manu,[5] and according to a commentator of the 17th cen. A. D., this includes the practice of the good śūdras as well.[6]

Like the early lawgivers, Manu is guided by considerations of varṇa in the administration of justice, which affects the position of the śūdras adversely. If a kṣatriya defames a brāhmaṇa, he shall be fined a hundred paṇas, a vaiśya 150 or 200 paṇas, but a śūdra shall suffer corporal punishment.[7] If a brāhmaṇa defames a kṣatriya, a vaiśya or a śūdra, he shall be fined respectively 50, 25 or 12 paṇas.[8] The fact that a fine of 12 paṇas is prescribed in the case of a brāhmaṇa abusing a śūdra is significant, for in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* no fine is provided in such a case.[9]

Generally Manu lays down very severe punishments for śūdras offending against the members of the superior varṇas. Thus if a śūdra insults a twice-born with gross invective, he shall have his tongue cut out.[10] The term twice-born (*dvijāti*) indicates only the brāhmaṇa and the kṣatriya, for this punishment is

1. *Ibid.*, VIII. 123.
2. *Ibid.*, VIII. 124-5
3. *Ibid.*, VIII. 24.
4. *Ibid.*, VIII. 41.
5. *Ibid.*, II. 6.
6. Quoted in K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Rājadharma*, pp. 155-6.
7. *Manu*, VIII. 267.
8. *Ibid.*, VIII. 268.
9. XII 13.
10. *Manu*, VIII. 270.

expressly forbidden in the case of a śūdra reviling a vaiśya[1] Manu further provides that, if a śūdra mentions the names and castes of the twice-born (dvijāti) with contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth.[2] If he arrogantly teaches brāhmaṇas their duties, the king shall cause hot oil to be put into his mouth and into his ears.[3] Jayaswal suggests that these provisions are directed against the 'dharma'-preaching learned śūdras, i.e. the Buddhist or Jain śūdras and śūdras who claim equality with the higher classes.[4] Apparently these provisions are laws against the author's political opponents, who flout the established order.[5] It is difficult to say how far these laws were put into effect. Perhaps they may have been the suggestions of a fanatic and were rarely if ever put into practice.[6]

In cases of assault and similar crimes the punishments prescribed for the śūdras are very harsh. It is provided that the very limb with which a man of low caste (*antyajaḥ*) hurts a man of the highest caste (*śreṣṭhaḥ*) shall be cut off.[7] Here Kullūka takes *antyaja* in the sense of śūdra,[8] which agrees with a similar rule of earlier times.[9] The term *śreṣṭha* refers to brāhmaṇas and not to the men of three higher castes, such as is sometimes understood.[10] In a verse Manu states that he who raises his hand or a stick shall have his hand cut off; he who in anger kicks with his feet shall have his foot cut off.[11] Probably this also refers to the offences of the śūdra against the brāhmaṇa. It is further laid down that if a man of the lowest birth (*apakṛṣṭajaḥ*) tries to place himself on the same seat with a person of high caste (*utkṛṣṭaḥ*), he shall be brande don his hip and banished, or the king shall cause his buttock to be gashed.[12]

1. *Manu*, VIII. 277.
2. *Ibid.*, VIII. 271. The term *dvijāti* is explained by Kull. as 'brāhmaṇas and others', but probably it refers to brāhmaṇas alone.
3. *Manu*, VIII. 272.
4. *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 150.
5. Cf. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Aspects of the Pol. and Soc. System of Manu*, p. 132
6. Basham, *Wonder that was India*, p. 80.
7. *Manu*, VIII. 279.
8. Kull. on Manu, VIII. 279.
9. *Gaut. Dh. S.*, XII. 1; This rule also occurs in the *A Ś.*
10. *SBE*, XXV, 303.
11. *Manu*, VIII. 280.
12. *Ibid.*, VIII. 281.

The *apakṛṣṭaja* stands for the śūdra and the *utkṛṣṭa* for the brāhmaṇa.[1] Similarly if out of arrogance the śūdra spits on a brāhmaṇa, the king shall cause both his lips to be cut off ; if he urinates on him, the penis ; if he breaks wind against him, the anus.[2] Again, if the śūdra lays hold of the hair of a brāhmaṇa, the king should unhesitatingly amputate his hands, likewise if he takes him by the feet, the beard, the neck, or the scrotum.[3] Perhaps to cover all such cases, Manu lays down a general rule that the king shall inflict on a base-born śūdra, who intentionally gives pain to brāhmaṇas, various corporal punishments which cause terror.[4] Giving pain to the brāhmaṇas is interpreted as causing him physical pain or stealing his property.[5]

Most of the provisions enumerated above are directed against the śūdras offending against the brāhmaṇas. Even the mere existence of these provisions in the law-book shows that relations between the highest and the lowest varṇas were very strained. We have hardly any evidence to determine whether such provisions were carried out. The *Mahāvastu*, however, informs us that sometimes severe bodily tortures were inflicted on the hired labourers in order to make them work. This text states that some people cause these workers to be shackled with fetters and chains, ordering the hands and feet of many to be pierced, and the nose, flesh, sinews, arms and back of many to be slit five or ten times.[6] The *Saddharmapuṇḍarika* refers to a young man of good family bound in wooden manacles.[7] Therefore it is small wonder if śūdra offenders were subjected to corporal punishments, but whether the penal laws of Manu were literally applied to them is open to doubt.

1. Kull. on *Manu*, VIII 28. Medhā. and Govindarāja concur with Kull. (*SBE*, xxv, 303)

2. *Manu*, VIII. 282.

3. *Ibid.*, VIII. 283

4. *Ibid.*, IX. 248.

5. Kull. on *Manu*, IX. 248.

6. *Mahāvastu*, i, 18. Senart has the term *hastimgaḍādibhiḥ*, but Bailey reads it as *hadio*, which also occurs in *Divya.*, pp. 365 and 435 in the sense of fetters (*SBB*, xvi, 15, fn. 2). The term *karahīgoraki* is used in Maithilī in the sense of wooden shackles.

7. p. 289.

Harsh punishments are, however, not prescribed in the case of people of equal castes assaulting each other. It is laid down that he who breaks the skin of an equal or draws blood from him shall be fined 100 paṇas; he who cuts a muscle six niṣkas, and he who breaks a bone shall be banished.[1] According to Rāghavānanda this rule refers to śūdras assaulting śūdras.[2]

For the expiation of the sin of murder Manu prescribes the performance of the lunar penance, which varies in length according to the varṇa of the murdered person. A penance lasting for three years is prescribed in the case of the murder of a brāhmaṇa and a penance for $2\frac{1}{4}$ months in the case of the murder of a śūdra.[3] For killing a śūdra Manu prescribes a wergeld of ten cows and a bull,[4] such as is found in the earlier law-books. But he adds that this fine is to be paid to a brāhmaṇa.[5] Similarly, like the earlier lawgivers, he prescribes the same penance for killing a śūdra as for killing a number of small animals and birds.[6] Such provisions leave no doubt that Manu attaches very little importance to the life of a śūdra. Curiously enough, in one provision of Manu's rules regarding murder there is no trace of varṇa distinctions. If the case involves the death of a member of any varṇa, a falsehood may be spoken and the sin arising therefrom may be expiated by making offering to the Sarasvatī.[7] Manu also declares that slaying women, śūdras, vaiśyas and kṣatriyas is a minor offence, causing loss of caste.[8] But this rule is probably merely meant to emphasise the importance of the life of a brāhmaṇa.

Manu holds that the higher the varṇa, the greater is the crime in committing theft; the guilt of a śūdra is considered the smallest,[9] for the habit of stealing is thought to be more usual with him.

1. *Manu*, VIII. 284.
2. *SBE*, xxv, 304.
3. *Manu*, XI. 127, cf. 129-131.
4. *Ibid*, XI. 128-31.
5. *Ibid.*, XI. 131.
6. *Manu*, XI. 132.141. This rule shows a discrepancy between the religious and 'secular' punishments of Manu and other lawgivers, for according to secular provisions a wergeld of ten cows and a bull is prescribed for killing a śūdra.
7. *Manu*, VIII 104-5.
8. *Ibid.*, XI. 67.
9. *Ibid.*, VIII. 337-38.

In the law of inheritance Manu upholds the old rule of giving the tenth part of property to the śūdra son of a brāhmaṇa, even when the father has no son by wives of the higher castes.[1] There also recurs the old idea that the śūdra son of a brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya or a vaiśya is not entitled to any share ; whatever is allotted to him by his father becomes his share ;[2] a śūdra can be regarded as a kinsman but not an heir.[3] As regards inheritance among the śūdras, even if there be a hundred sons, their shares shall be equal.[4] Thus, only the śūdra sons of the higher caste people were not always certain of receiving shares. Generally, members of the śūdra varṇa enjoyed the right to property. This can be also inferred from another law, according to which property stolen by thieves must be restored by the king to the members of all the varṇas.[5]

Manu's laws of adultery do not discriminate so much against śūdra women as against śūdra men. If a brāhmaṇa approaches unguarded women of the three lower varṇas, he shall be fined 500 paṇas ; for a similar crime against an antyaja woman the fine shall be raised to a thousand paṇas.[6] The same fine shall be imposed on a kṣatriya or a vaiśya if he has intercourse with a guarded śūdra woman.[7] If a brāhmaṇa dallies with a vṛṣalī for a night, he removes that sin in three years, by subsisting on alms and daily muttering sacred texts.[8] While most of these laws are meant to preserve the purity of the brāhmaṇa by preventing moral lapses on his part, they make it clear that Manu also protects the purity of the śūdra woman. This is in keeping with his principle that women of all the four varnas should be protected.[9]

But the rule of Manu that people should not converse with the wives of others does not apply to some sections of

1. *Ibid.*, IX. 151-154
2. *Ibid*, IX. 155.
3. *Ibid.*, IX. 160.
4. *Ibid.*, IX. 157.
5. *Ibid.*, VIII. 40.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII. 385.
7. *Ibid.*, VIII. 383.
8. *Ibid.*, XI. 179.
9. *Manu*, VIII. 359.

śūdras such as actors and singers, for they live on the intrigues of their wives.[1] Nevertheless, those who converse with these and female slaves under the charge of a master are required to pay a small fine.[2] Buddhist and Jain nuns are also included in this category,[3] for they were probably recruited from the lower orders, and, like monks, were looked upon as śūdras.[4] Manu prescribes the most severe punishment for a śūdra male adulterer. The śūdra who has intercourse with an unguarded woman of the twice-born caste shall lose the part offending and all his property ; in the case of such an offence against a guarded woman he shall lose everything, even his life.[5] Here the term twice-born (dvijāti) seems to refer to the brāhmaṇa, for the two following rules provide punishments for ksatriya and vaiśya offenders against a brāhmaṇa woman.[6] But if these two offend against a guarded brāhmaṇī who is the wife of an eminent brāhmaṇa, they shall be also punished like a śūdra or be burnt in a fire of dry grass.[7] It may be recalled that in this case Kauṭilya provides the punishment of death by burning only for the śūdra offender,[8] although Vasiṣṭha provides similar punishments for kṣatriya and vaiśya offenders as well.[9] A passage of Manu is taken to mean that in such a case the śūdra shall be punished with death.[10] Since the death penalty for the śūdra adulterer is generally corroborated by other sources, this provision of Manu may not have been ineffective.

Manu's laws regarding slavery throw considerable light on the civic status of the śūdras. According to Kauṭilya the śūdra sons of āryan parents cannot be reduced to slavery. But although Manu allows shares in the inheritance of family property to śūdra sons, he does not refer to this practice.

1. *Manu*, VIII. 361-2.
2. *Ibid.*, VIII. 363
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, pp. 167-8.
5. *Manu*, VIII. 374.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII 375-6.
7. *Ibid.*, VIII. 377.
8. *AŚ*, IV. 13.
9. *Vas. Dh. S.*, XXI. 2-3.
10. *Manu*, VIII. 359 with the comm. of Kull. The terms used is *abrāhmaṇī*, which is taken in the sense of śūdra by Kull.

He is the first to enunciate the principle that slavery is the eternal destiny of a śūdra. But this applies only to relations between the brāhmaṇas and the śūdras. Manu states that a śūdra, whether bought or unbought, should be reduced to slavery because he is created by God for the service of a brāhmaṇa.[1] In the next verse he adds that a śūdra cannot be released from servitude because servitude is innate in him.[2] As compared to the śūdras, the members of the twice-born castes cannot be reduced to slavery. If a brāhmaṇa compels men of the twice-born castes to work as slaves, he shall be fined 600 (panas) by the king.[3] In this connection Kauṭilya provides a graded scheme of fines ; the highest fine of 48 paṇas is provided by him for enslaving a brāhmaṇa.[4] Manu does not refer to such distinctions but provides a far heavier fine for enslaving the people of the three upper varṇas.

Even in the law-book of Manu, all the śūdras are not treated as slaves.[5] The legal distinction between a śūdra and a slave is clearly recognised by Manu, who refers to the son of a śūdra by a dāsī (female slave of his slave).[6] Thus, though the slave may have been generally recruited from the śūdra varṇa, sometimes the śūdras themselves owned slaves. But the distinction between the śūdra and his slave was not so wide as that between the twice-born and his slave. According to Manu, if permitted by the father, the son of a śūdra by a female slave could take a share of the inheritance.[7] But this is not provided in the case of the similar sons of the twice-born. Incidentally, the above law of Manu shows that slaves enjoyed the right to property. According to the comment of Kullūka on a passage of Manu, when the master is abroad, for the sake of his family the slave

1. *Śūdrāṁ tu kārayed dāsyaṁ krītam akrītam eva vā; dāsyāyaiva hi sṛṣṭo'sau brāhmaṇasya svayaṁbhuvā. Manu*, VIII. 413.

2. *na svāminā nisṛṣṭo'pi śūdro dāsyād vimucyate ; nirvartyam hi tattasya kasmāttadapohati. Manu*, VIII. 414. This is treated by Medhātithi as a glorified exaggeration (*arthavāda*), but probably it better indicates conditions in the time of the commentator than that of Manu.

3. *Manu*, VIII. 412.

4. *AŚ*, III. 13.

5. This question has been dealt with in detail by G. F. Ilvin, "Śūdras und Sklaven in den altindischen Gesetzbuchern" *Sanjatie ssovetskaya Gosudarstvennoi Akademii Istorii Material'noi Kultury*, 1932, No. 2, pp. 105-108. Cf. Senart, *op. cit.*, 103.

6. *dāsyāṁ vā dāsadāsyāṁ vā jaḥ śūdrasya sato bhavet. Manu*, IX. 179

7. *Ibid.*

can represent him in business transactions, which the master cannot rescind.[1] At another place, however, this is denied by Manu ; sale made by one not the real owner is declared invalid.[2] It has been pointed out earlier that on failure of competent witnesses even slaves and servants could give evidence. All this would show that even the slaves had some status in law.

In some sense domestic slaves were treated as members of the family. Manu enjoins the head of the household not to enter into discussions with his parents, sister, daughter-in-law, brother, wife, son, daughter and dāsa.[3] Stating the reason for this he points out that wife and son are parts of the body of the householder,[4] that the daughter deserves kindness, and that the class of slaves forms his own shadow. Hence Manu instructs that, even if these people insult the housholder, he should calmly put up with them.[5] Does this suggest that the old family solidarity suffered a temporary break-down ? For it sounds curious that this lawgiver should ask the master to pocket the insults given by his slaves.

But the slaves and the hired labourers did not enjoy the same rights as the citizens. This can be inferred from the conditions obtaining in the republican states of the Mālavas and the Kṣudrakas. Commenting on a passage of Pāṇini Patañjali states that the sons of the Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas are respectivly known as Kṣaudrakyas and Mālavyas, but this does not apply to the sons of their slaves and labourers.[6]

Manu's provisions regarding the politico-legal position of the śūdras are mostly based on the similar rules of the older authorities. Of his new provisions some were directed against the foreign rulers and followers of heterodox sects who were

1 Here the term *adhyadhīna* means a dāsa according to Kull. *Manu*, VIII. 167.

2. *Manu*, VIII. 199.

3. IV. 180.

4. IV. 184.

5. IV. 185.

6. *idaṃ tarhi kṣaudrakāṇāmapatyam mālavānāmapatyamiti. atrāpi kṣaudrakyaḥ mālavya iti nantatteṣām dāse vā bhavati karmakare vā.* Pat. on *Pā*, IV. 1.168. Cf. *Kāśikā on Pā.*, V. 3. 114.

condemned as śūdras, and others against the śūdras as such. The provisions of the later type mainly relate to śudras offending against brāhmaṇas. But even in this respect Manu's policy of gross discrimination against the śūdras could not make any appreciable headway. He not only retains the old provision of wergeld for the life of a śūdra but also prescribes a fine of 12 paṇas for the brāhmaṇa abusing a śūdra—a provision which is not to be found in the earlier law-books. It is significant that towards the end of this period the Sātavāhana ruler Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi (A. D. 106-130) claims to have restored order out of the confusion of the four varnas by conciliating the brāhmaṇas and the śūdras (*avaras*).[1] This alignment of the varṇas was directed by the brāhmaṇa ruler against the kṣatriyas,[2] who perhaps belonged to the foreign ruling dynasties.

Manu's provisions regarding the social position of the śūdras are largely the re-mastications of the views of the older authorities. But he introduces certain new discriminations against them. He recounts the old story of creation which gives the lowest place to the śūdras.[3] He also repeats the old law prescribing different forms of greetings (presumably used by a brāhmaṇa) in relation to the members of the four varṇas.[4] But he adds that a brāhmaṇa who does not know the form of returning salutation must not be saluted by a learned man because he is like a śūdra.[5] We learn from Patañjali that in returning greetings śūdras were addressed differently from non-śūdras. Thus an elevated tone was not to be used in addressing śūdras. The term *bho* (a vocative particle) was to be used in addressing a rājanya or a vaiśya[6] but not a śūdra. Hence varṇa distinctions were reflected even in the formation of grammatical rules. Manu provides that a śūdra can be respected if he has reached the tenth

1. *dijāvara kuṭūba vivadhanasa.. vinivatita cātuvaṇa saṃkarasa.* Nāsik Cave Inscription of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi, ls. 5-6 (D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, i, 197).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Manu*, I. 31.

4. *Ibid.*, II.127.

5. *Ibid.*, II.126.

6. *bho rājanyaviśāṃ vā.* Pat. on *Pā.*, VIII. 2. 82-83.

decade of his life.[1] But such a rule can have covered only a very limited number of śūdras.

Manu introduces varṇa distinctions even in the ceremony of (naming) of the child, which naturally emphasises the low position of the śūdra. According to him a brāhmaṇa's name should denote something auspicious, a ksatriya's name power, a vaiśya' name wealth and a śūdra's name something contemptible.[2] As a corollary to this he states that the titles of the members of the four varṇas should respectively imply happiness, protection, prosperity and service.[3] We have no evidence that this practice was widely followed, but Manu's provisions with regard to names show that the members of the lower orders were generally objects of contempt in brāhmaṇical society. Thus the word *vṛsala* used for the śūdra was a term of abuse and opprobrium. While illustrating a rule of Pāṇini regarding the formation of the *samāsas* Patañjali states that "like the female slave" or "like the vrsah" are terms of abuse,[4] suggesting thereby that śūdras and slaves were considered despicable elements in society. The vṛṣala was placed in the category of the thief, and both aroused brāhmaṇical hostility.[5] We also learn that the vṛsala, the dasyu and the thief were treated as contemptible people.[6]

The company of the śūdra was considered contaminating for a brāhmaṇa. Manu states that a brāhmaṇa who lives in the company of the most excellent people and shuns all low people becomes most distinguished ; by the opposite conduct he is degraded to the position of śūdra.[7] He reproduces the provision that the snātaka should not travel with the śūdras.[8] Manu recalls the old rule that if the vaiśyas and śūdras come to the house

1. *Manu*, II. 137. Cf. Gautama who declares that a śūdra is worthy of respect on reaching the age of eighty.

2. *Manu* II. 31.

3. *śarmavadbrāhmaṇasya syādrājño rakṣāsamanvitam; vaiśyasyapuṣṭisaṃyuktaṃ śūdrasya preṣyasaṃyutam. Manu*, II. 32. Kull. comments that these titles should be respectively *śarman*, *varman*, *bhūti* and *dāsa*.

4. Pat. on *Pā*., VI. 2.11.
5. Pat. on *Pā*., II. 2.11 and III.2.127.
6. Pat. on *Pā*., V. 3. 66 ; cf. Pat. on *Pā*., III.1.107-8.
7. *Manu*, IV.245.
8. *Ibid.*, IV.140 He, however, uses the word *vṛṣala* in the place of *śūdra*.

of a brāhmaṇa as guests, out of compassion they should be permitted to take their food along with the servants.[1] Manu provides that the snātaka should not eat the food of a śūdra.[2] In a long list of those whose food should not be taken by the snātaka are blacksmiths, niṣādas, stage-players, goldsmiths, basket-makers, trainers of hunting dogs, distillers and vendors of spiritous liquors (śauṇdikas), washermen and dyers.[3] It is further stated that the food of a king impairs the vigour of the snātaka, the food of a śūdra his excellence in sacred learning, the food of a goldsmith his longevity and that of a leather-cutter (*carmāvakartinaḥ*) his fame.[4] Curiously enough, along with the food of the various sections of the śūdra community, the food of the king is also considered as detrimental to the welfare of the snātaka. Manu further adds that the food of an artisan destroys the offspring of the snātaka, that of a washerman his physical strength and the food of the tribal groups and harlots excludes him from the higher worlds.[5] If he takes the food of any of these people unintentionally, he must fast for three days ; but if he has done so intentionally, he must perform a difficult penance known as the *kṛcchra*.[6] It seems that in all these references the snātaka probably means a Vedic student from the brāhmaṇa varṇa. The result of these restrictions, if enforced, would be to prevent all social contacts between the lower orders and the educated brāhmaṇas. Manu lays down that the learned brāhmaṇa must not take the cooked food of a śūdra who does not perform the rites of *śrāddha*, but on failure of all other means of subsistence he might accept raw grain sufficient to maintain him for one night.[7] But such a rule is not valid in abnormal times. Manu cites several examples of the distinguished sages who took forbidden food in time of distress.[8] Thus hungry Viśvāmitra, who could distin-

1. *Manu*, III.112.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 211.
3. *Ibid.*, IV.215-16.
4. *Ibid.*, IV.218.
5. *kārukānnaṃ prajāṃ hanti balaṃ nirṇejakasya ca; gaṇānnaṃ gaṇikānnaṃ ca lokebhyaḥ parikṛntati. Manu*, IV. 219.
6. *Manu*, IV. 222.
7. *Ibid*, IV. 223.
8. *Manu*, X. 106-8.

guish between right and wrong, was ready to eat the haunch of a dog, receiving it from the hands of a caṇḍāla.[1] Generally the food of the śūdras was accepted in normal times. Manu lays down that, among śūdras, one may eat the food of his share-cropper, a friend of his family, his cow-herd, his slave and his barber.[2] Patañjali informs us that the plates of carpenters, washermen, and blacksmiths could be used after proper cleaning.[3] This would suggest that in matters of food there were relations of give and take between the members of the higher varṇas and these sections of the śūdra community. To eat the leavings of the śūdras was considered a great sin. It is stated that he who has eaten the leavings of women and śūdras should remove the impurity by drinking barley gruel for seven days and nights.[4] Perhaps this rule applies to the brāhmaṇa. Similarly a brāhmaṇa who drinks water left by a śūdra should expiate his sin by drinking water in which kuśa grass has been boiled for three days.[5] Manu's provisions throw some light on the dietary habits of the śūdras. The twice-born should perform the *cāndrāyaṇa* penance if he eats dried meat, mushrooms growing on the earth and meat about the origin of which he has no knowledge, or which had been kept in a slaughter-house.[6] Similarly if the twice-born takes the meat of carnivorous animals, boars, camels, cocks, crows, human beings and asses, he should perform a very difficult penance known as the *taptakṛcchra*.[7] If in these references the dvija is taken as a member of the first three varnas, it would imply that śūdras were free to take all varieties of meat. Commenting on a passage of Manu Kullūka states that, by eating garlic and other kinds of forbidden roots, the śūdra cannot commit an offence

1 *Manu*, X. 108.

2. The possessive pronoun does not occur in the text, but Kull. interprets the passage to apply only to a man's own servants. This seems to be more in the spirit of Manu than if it were taken as referring to all sharecroppers etc. *Manu* IV. 253. The term *ārdhikah* has been wrongly translated as "labourer in tillage' in *SBE*, xxv, 168 The cow-herd is used in the sense of an *ābhīra* in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali.

3. Pat. on *Pā.*, II.4 10.
4 *Manu*, XI. 153.
5. *Ibid.*, XI. 149 with the comm. of Kull.
6. *Ibid.*, XI. 156.
7. *Ibid.*, X. 157.